महाभारत

# The Mahābhārata of Vyasa

BOOK 7

THE COMPLETE DRONA PARVA

TRANSCREATED FROM SANSKRIT

by P. Lal

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# THE MAHĀBHĀRATA OF VYĀSA

The Complete Droṇa Parva
Transcreated śloka-by-śloka from Sanskrit by P. Lāl

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Two birds sit
on the golden bough
of the pippala tree.
One eats
the sweet fruit.
The other watches.
Both are happy.
One is happier.
Which?

*Śvetāśvatara*
*Upaniṣad* IV : 6

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महाभारत

# The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

Transcreated by P. Lāl from the Sanskrit

BOOK SEVEN

The Complete Droṇa Parva

## The Transcreator

P. Lāl is honorary Professor of English in St. Xavier's College, Calcutta. He was Special Professor of Indian Studies at Hofstra University, New York, 1962-63, and has lectured widely on Indian literature at English, American, and Australian universities. He was a delegate from India to the P. E. N. International Writers Conference in New York in June 1966, and Visiting Professor in the University of Illinois for the spring semester of 1968. Transcreated the Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Mahānārānayaṇa Upaniṣads on a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship award in 1969-70. Visiting Professor of Comparative Literature, Hofstra University, spring 1971. Distinguished Visiting Professor and Consultant, Albion College, April-May 1972. Prentiss M. Brown Distinguished Visiting Professor, Albion College, January-May 1973. Robert Norton Visiting Professor, Ohio University, September 1973-June 1974. Visiting Professor of Indian Culture, Hartwick College, September-October 1975. Eli Lilly Visiting Professor, Berea College, February-May 1977. Honorary Doctorate of Letters, Western Maryland College, 1977. Currently at work on the complete English version of the Mahābhārata. Born 1928, married Shyamasree Devi 1955; has a son Ananda, and a daughter Srimati. Recipient of the Padma Shri award in 1970. Delegate to Asian Poets' Conference, Bangkok, 1988; Cambridge Literary Seminar, 1989; Harborfront Poetry Reading Series, Toronto, Canada, 1989. Appointed Suniti Kumar Chatterji Lecturer of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata in June 2005. Seventy five cassettes (each of 90 minutes' duration) of P. Lāl reading his transcreation of Vyāsa's Mahābhārata are available from WRITERS WORKSHOP. In October 1999 P. Lal began a śloka-by-śloka public reading of the transcreated epic to a miscellaneous group every Sunday morning for an hour at the Library of Dharma and Culture in Calcutta to illustrate the importance of Vyāsa's work as an inspiring *oral* experience and not just a print-culture masterpiece, the long-term reading project to proceed till the hundred thousand and plus ślokas are exhausted. 300 hour-long CDs of this recording, taped live are available from WW.

# Preface

*Śraddhā* is not translatable into English. It is a mixture of respect bordering on reverence, reverence bordering on bhakti, a bhakti that seamlessly blends humility and hallelujah. In India, the word "Sir" has no connections with knighthood. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, "Sir" in India refers specifically to a teacher. "Sir said to me" can only mean "My teacher said to me."

In other words, my "guru". Which reminds us of one of the core values of the Indian tradition: the wondrous, mysterious, near-spiritual bond that exists between teacher and taught, ācārya and *śiṣya*. (The Indian tradition loves thrusting NGO titles on its esteemed leaders : *Pandit* Jawaharlal Nehru, *Acharya* Vinoba Bhave, *Acharya* Kripalani, Ishwar Chandra *Vidyasagar* (Ocean of Learning), *Gurudeva* Rabindranath Tagore. These titles are not government hand-outs, but grassroots appreciation of services rendered. They are genuinely deserved, and have to be lived up to by the recipient – irremovable conspicuous auspicious albatrosses round one's neck for ever.)

What makes the Droṇa Parva so memorable is precisely this guru-*celā* relationship between Droṇa and Arjuna. Droṇa will not harm Arjuna, his pupil; and Arjuna will not harm Droṇa, his guru. But the world is what it is – and both must face each other, courtesy of Mahākāla, on the sacred battlefield of Kurukṣetra. General Droṇa's suggestion to Duryodhana is simple: "Isolate and divert Arjuna, and I will capture Yudhiṣṭhira." Arjuna has already, shamefully using Śikhaṇḍin as a shield, "killed" Bhīṣma, more his patriarch than guru. But he refuses to wield his Gāṇḍīva against Droṇa.

Bhīṣma is the eldest "grancestor" whose permission is essential for any drastic action by a family member. Yudhiṣṭhira has already touched his feet, and obtained from him the "secret" of how to kill him in battle.

And now Karṇa, the eldest Pāṇḍava, the out-of-wedlock son of Kunti, approaches Bhīṣma. Readers and scholars of Vyāsa's epic rave over the sweet-sentimental, poignant-pungent, haunting and disturbing brief scene when pleading mother Kuntī meets unbending son Karṇa on the banks of the Gaṅgā. The son refuses his mother – how utterly, ignominiously un-Indian! But an equally unforgettable episode is often ignored – at the close of the Bhīṣma Parva, when Karṇa goes to Bhīṣma lying on his bed of arrows and waiting for the

northern solstice before he gives up his *prāṇa*-life-breath. Karṇa wants a guru's blessings – and permission – to fight on Kurukṣetra against his own brothers. Bhīṣma gives him both blessings and permission. Patriarch and guru are helpless before a determined and dedicated mind.

Son and *śiṣya*, patriarch and guru: the Droṇa Parva focuses on a tense, subtle relationship. Hermann Hesse vividly underlines it when Siddhartha, the Protestant son, wants his Catholic Brahmin father's permission to embark on a voyage of self-discovery – and is refused point-blank. (He gets it through Gandhian satyāgraha).

One of the most beautiful and insightful ślokas in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa deals with this problem. It says there are five kinds of sons/ disciples. In order of importance: first, the son/disciple who reads his father's/guru's mind, and does what he is expected to do; second, he interprets the elder's gesture, and does what has to be done; third, he obeys the elder's command, and does it happily; fourth, he obeys the command, but unwillingly, and fifth, he listens to the command, and does exactly what he, not the elder, wants done.

In which of these five slots does Arjuna belong?

But the Bhāgavata Purāṇa posits an ideal guru-*śiṣya* bond. The reality on the ground – specially on the battleground – is very different. What if the guru, like Bhīṣma and Droṇa, has divided loyalties? What if the *śiṣya*, like Yudhiṣṭhira, gives winning the war a higher priority than spouting the "Aśvatthāman (the elephant) is dead" half-lie? What if Drona switches thin-necked pots with large-necked ones in order to give Aśvatthāman, his son, an advantage? What if Bhīṣma flatly warns Duryodhana that he has soft feelings for the Pāṇḍavas and launches into a fulsome *stuti* of the divinity of Krishna?

It's a worrisome dilemma, and no one should know it better than Vyāsa. After all, was it not his own son Śuka who drove him to near-suicide by refusing to follow the family tradition and preferring to experiment with fulfilling his "individual" personality by leaving home?

Hardly any Mahābhārata scholar has paid serious attention to this disappointment in the life of Vyāsa.

Kolkata
December 2005



# *Dedication*

This *parva* of guru Droṇa
is dedicated respectfully
two eminent Sanskrit and Hindi scholars
(who also became friends)
PRITHVINATH SHASTRI and AKSHAYA CHANDRA SHARMA
without whose assistance
with supply of not easily accessible texts
and illuminating discussions
my English transcreation of the epic
would not have been possible
and whose recent passing away
has left an unfillable void
in the realm of Indian *sāhitya*

and
this parva is dedicated also to
KALYAN MAL LUDHA
another helpful pandit-patriarch
who represents the finest values
of the Indian traditions of *śruti* and *smrti.*

Nārāyaṇaṁ namaskṛtya
Naraṁ caiva Narottamaṁ |
Devīṁ Sarasvatīm Vyāsaṁ
tato jayam udīrayet ||

INVOCATION

We namaskāra Nārāyaṇa!
We namaskāra Nara!
We namaskāra finest-of-men Narottama!
We namaskāra Devī Sarasvatī!
We namaskāra Vyāsa!
May victory attend us. We exclaim Jaya!

नारायण नमस्कृत्य
नरं चैव नरोत्तमम्
देवीं सरस्वतीं व्यासं
ततो जयमुदीरयेत

## SECTION ONE

1 Janamejaya said: "Hearing that strict-vowed,
powerful, indefatigable Bhīṣma
had been killed
by Pāñcāla-Śikhaṇḍin,

2 What did the brave rājā Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
his eyes swollen with heavy sorrow, do?
What steps did he take,
O Brahmin ṛṣi?

3 *Bhagavan!* Revered one! His son Duryodhana
was eager to possess the kingdom
after routing the mahā-bowmen Pāṇḍavas
with Bhīṣma's and Droṇa's help.

4 O holy one rich in tapasyā! *Bhagavan!*
Tell me all that he did –
the great Kaurava monarch –
after all weapons-expert Bhīṣma was killed."

5 When he heard of his *pitā* Bhīṣma's death
(Vaiśampāyana replied),
Dhṛtarāṣṭra tossed restless, O lord of men,
in grief's great bewilderment.

6 And the pure-ātmaned Sañjaya,
son of Gavalgaṇa,
came to the monarch
lost in his drowning grief.

7 Mahārāja, Ambikā's son Dhṛtarāṣṭra
enquired from Sañjaya,
who had returned to Hastināpura,
about the army camp.

[VII:1:8-16]

Transcreated by P. Lal

8 The death of Bhīṣma
seemed to have broken him.
He longed for the victory of his sons,
he burst into lamentation.

9 "What happened, Sañjaya, *tāta,* dear one,"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"to the Kāla-afflicted Kauravas
when mahātmā Bhīṣma perished?

10 Sunk in the sea of their sorrow,
what did they do
when the undefeated mahātmā hero
was taken from them?

11 O Sañjaya,
the unparallelled excellence
of the mahā-army of the mahātmā Pāṇḍavas
can terrorise the three worlds.

12 In that fearful mahā-crisis,
who was there in the army
of my son Duryodhana
on whom they could rely?

13 What did all the kings plan
when strict-vowed Devavrata-Bhīṣma
was killed?
Tell me, Sañjaya,"

14 O rājā! (replied Sañjaya)
listen carefully to every word I say
about your sons' reactions
after the fall of Devavrata-Bhīṣma.

15 When undefeated Bhīṣma died,
your sons and the Pāṇḍavas
brooded separately, O rājā,
over their next course of action.

16 They re-examined Kṣatriya dharma.
It was inspiring and frightening.
Each condemning his own sva-dharma,
they *praṇāma-ed* mahātmā Bhīṣma.

17 Then those tigers-among-men
prepared a special heard-rest
of knotted arrows
for immeasurably powerful Bhīṣma.

18 Making arrangements for his safety,
they greeted each other;
they obtained Gāṅgeya-Bhīṣma's permission
and, after doing *pradakṣiṇa*,

19 They stared at each other
with copper-red anger
and, called again by Kāla,
the Kṣatriyas re-grouped for battle.

20 Trumpets blared
Drums sounded
As your sons
And the Pāṇḍavas
Marched to battle.

21 O Indra-among-rājās,
after Bhīṣma was killed
and the day was ending,
the confused soldiers, ignoring

22 The beneficial advice
of the mahātmā son of Gaṅgā,
to end the war, marched out,
brave Bharatas brandishing their weapons.

23 Your folly, the folly of your sons,
and the death of Bhīṣma
made all the rājās
potential victims of death.

24 With strict-vowed Bhīṣma,
they were a herd of goats
without a herdsman
in a forest infested with wild beasts.

25 Without best-of-the-Bharatas Bhīṣma,
the Kaurava army was
like space without planets
like sky without wind.

[VII:1:26-32]

Transcreated by P. Lal

26 Like earth
with harvest desolated
Like speech
with crude phrases
Like the army of the anti-gods
bareft of brave Bali

27 Like a lovely-thighed lady
widowed
Like a stream
dried up
Like a doe
without her mate
and ringed by wolves

28 Like a mountain cave whose lion
has been killed
by the eight-legged *śarabha.*
With best-of-the-Bharatas Bhīṣma killed,
Jāhnavī-Gaṅgā's son killed,
the army of the Bharatas

29 Was a boat tossing
on a heaving mahā-ocean
buffeted by storms.
It was attacked on all sides
by the valiant Pāṇḍavas.

30 Your elephant-warriors,
cavalry and chariot-heroes
were in a state of utter desapir,
fear and helplessness.

31 Without Devavrata-Bhīṣma,
the kings and soldiers of your army
in their extreme peril
seemed to be sliding in the underworld of Pātāla.

32 At this time the Kauravas thought of Karṇa,
a warrior as remarkable as Bhīṣma,
an acknowledged master of all weapons of war,
as to a guest happily

33 Turns a householder,
or as a man in trouble turns to a friend,
and the earth-lords of the Bharatas shouted
"Karṇa! Karṇa!

34 Sūta-putra Rādheya-Karṇa is our well-wisher.
For ten days
that mahā-glorious hero has refrained
from fighting; so have his

35 Friends and followers. But no more!
Summon him! This instant!"
In the presence of all the Kṣatriyas,
Bhīṣma had described mahā-muscled Karṇa

36 As a half-chariot hero when the roll-call
of heroes was announced,
though bull-brave Karṇa is indeed
a double chariot-hero.

37 In the list of chariot-heroes
and superior chariot-heroes,
such was the place of Karṇa
who challenged gods and anti-gods!

38 O rājā! That was when he burst out
in a fit of anger:
"Son of Gaṅgā,
Kaurava,
So long as you are living
I refuse to fight.

39 If you succeed, O Kaurava,
in killing the sons of Pāṇḍu,
I will take Duryodhana's permission
and retire to the forest.

40 But if you are killed
by the Pāṇḍavas
and attain heaven –
then depend on me
to drive my chariot
to the field of battle
and kill all whom you call
great chariot-heroes."

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41 Mahā-illustrious, mahā-muscled Karṇa said this
and, with your son Duryodhana's permission,
did not take part in the battle
for these ten days.

42 Bhīṣma displayed his valour, O Bharata descendant,
and killed countless Pāṇḍavas
on the battlefield.

43 When mahā-energetic, firm-in-truth Bhīṣma fell,
your sons thought of Karṇa,
like sea-voyagers hoping for a safe journey
when boarding a ship.

44 Your sons, together with all the rājās
and soldiers
shouted "Hai Karṇa!",
adding "Your time has come!"

45 And the mahā-powerful warriors of your army
shouted unanimously for Sūtaputra-Karṇa,
who was ready to lay down his life
for Duryodhana.

46 Karṇa had learnt his weapons-craft
from Jāmadagni-Paraśurāma himself,
so our minds turned to him as, in a crisis,
one turns to a friend.

47 Like Govinda-Krishna,
always ready to rescue the gods, O rājā,
Karṇa was competent to lift us out
of our mahā-crisis.

48 Puffing and breathing heavy snake-sighs,
king Dhṛtarāṣṭra
(Vaiśampāyana continued) said to Sañjaya
who was extolling Karṇa:

49 "Your minds turned to the charioteer's son
in that time of crisis,
but did you see Rādheya-Karṇa there,
ready to die for your sake?

50 Or did the truly valiant Karṇa
let down Duryodhana and his brothers
who were despondent and fear-stricken
and depended so heavily on him?

51 Was that brilliant bowman Karṇa
a satisfactory substitute for Bhīṣma
in that Kaurava-crisis?

52 Assuming that he was, Sañjaya,
did he strike terror
in the hearts of his enemies?
He is known in the world
as a 'tiger among men'.

53 Did he redeem the dispirited heroes
on the battlefield?
Did his disregard for his life
inspire fresh hope
of an ultimate victory
in the hearts of my sons?"

## SECTION TWO

1 Seeing Bhīṣma had fallen,
Karṇa decided
to save, like a brother,
your sons from the wreck
of their boat in the sea
of Kurukṣetra (said Sañjaya).

2 O king! When he heard
that Bhīṣma, the mahā-
chariot-hero, had fallen,
Karṇa, the foremost
of brilliant bowman,
rushed to the field.

3 With the fall of Bhīṣma
as the hands of the Pāṇḍavas,
Karṇa arrived,
like a father determined
to rescue his sons
from a sinking ship.

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4 Twanging the bow
Paraśurāma had gifted,
and running his hands
on the string, he fitted
arrows of fire
and arrows of wind,

5 And said, "When Bhīṣma,
the patient and strong,
and truthful and disciplined,
all-weapons-skilled,
the humble and gentle,
soft-spoken and loving,

6 And grateful, and terror
of the foes of Brahmins,
with virtues indelible
as the stain in the moon –
when Bhīṣma is fallen,
all heroes are fallen.

7 This world is all flux,
nothing is stable
at all in this world.
With mahā-vowed Bhīṣma dead,
can anyone be sure
of tomorrow's sun?

8 When the hero who had
the valour of Vasus,
the strength of Vasus,
has returned to the Vasus,
who are you to lament
for your wealth and your sons?"

9 When boon-giving Bhīṣma,
mahā-brave hero
had fallen, and the Kauravas
defeated, then Karṇa,
in tears, attempted
to comfort your soldiers.

10 O rājā! (said Sañjaya)
Your sons and their soldiers
heard Rādheya-Karṇa,
and standing there wept
profusely and moaned
in deep lamentation.

11 When battle resumed,
and the Kaurava soldiers
screamed out their war-cries,
the mahā-chariot-hero
bull-brave Karṇa
inspired joy in their hearts.

12 "This is a whirling world.
Nothing is stable.
With so many bull-brave
Kaurava heroes around him,
how could hill-firm Bhīṣma
be killed in battle?

13 Like the sun collapsing,
Śāntanava-Bhīṣma fell,
the mahā-chariot-hero.
How will the Kauravas now
face the hill-uprooting
Dhanañjaya-storm?

14 I will do what Bhīṣma
the mahātmā did –
protect the Kauravas,
dispirited and helpless,
decimated, demoralised
by the power of the Pāṇḍavas.

15 Yes, this is my burden.
The world is not stable.
If Bhīṣma, the finest
of warriors, can fall,
who am I to fear
what will happen or not?

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16 I shall speed through the field
consigning the Pāṇḍavas
to the realm of Yama.
With glory my goal,
I shall kill them or myself
lie dead on the field.

17 Yudhiṣṭhira has courage,
intelligence, truth;
and wolf-waisted Bhīma
is hundred-elephant-strong;
and Arjuna is young
and the son of Indra; –
not even the army
of the gods can dare
to vanquish the Pāṇḍavas.

18 No one returns
from the realm of Yama;
so no coward returns
alive from battling
with the Pāṇḍava twins
who resemble Death,
or alive from battling
with Sātyaki and Krishna,
son of Devakī.

19 Tapasyā is met
by tapasyā, and force
is met by force.
My mind is determined:
I shall fight the enemy,
I shall protect my soldiers.

20 It is decided, charioteer,
I am going to pit
might against might.
I will not allow
my friends to be humbled.
I am a friend in crisis.

21 Either this deed
of manly truth,
or surrender my *prāṇa*
like valiant Bhīṣma!
Either I win,
or die like a hero.

22 What else is my duty
when women and children
cry for help?
Emasculated Duryodhana
needs help, O charioteer.
I will crush his enemies.

23 I shall die if need be
defending the Kauravas
and destroying the Pāṇḍavas;
I shall kill my enemies
and restore the kingdom
to Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons.

24 So fasten this dazzling,
begemmed and bejewelled
armour on me,
and my sun-bright head-gear
and my fiery and poisonous
arrows and bows.

25 Sixteen quivers,
the toughest bows,
and maces and spears,
and excellent arrows,
and my gold-decorated
magnificent conch.

26 My lotus-emblemed flag,
exquisitely attractive,
beflowered and filigreed,
and polished to brightness.
And a rope strong enough
to bind an elephant.

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27 And, charioteer's son,
supply swift, cloud-tawny,
caparisoned horses,
glittering like gold,
and washed with mantra-
sanctified water.

28 And get me a chariot
with garlands of gold
and gems that shine
like the sun and the moon,
with snorting horses,
and loaded with weapons.

29 Provide me with bows
of flexible toughness
and fine-stretching bowstring
for far-shooting missiles,
and well-stocked quivers,
and coats of mail.

30 And fetch the auspicious
utensils required:
curd-filled brass
and golden vessels.
Put garlands on me.
Sound the victory-drums.

31 And, charioteer, drive me
to Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
and Vṛkodara-Bhīma,
the twins and Kirīṭin-Arjuna.
I shall follow Bhīṣma:
I will kill, or be killed.

32 It seems to me impossible
these kings can defeat
an army led by truth-firm
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
Arjuna, Bhīma, Sātyaki,
and Vāsudeva-Krishna.

33 If Death in person
protected Kirīṭin-Arjuna,
I would still kill him;
or follow the example
of Bhīṣma, and go
to the realm of Yama.

34 It is not for me now
to have second thoughts;
but I will not join
the foulers of friendship,
the feeble in faith,
the wicked-ātmaned."

35 In a glorious chariot,
exquisitely furnished
with golden, auspicious
trappings and flags,
with wind-swift steeds,
Karṇa drove to win the war.

36 Accepting the pūjā-respect
of the Kaurava soldiers,
like Indra among
the gallery of gods,
brilliant bowman
and bull-brave chariot-hero
Karṇa drove to where
the bull-brave Bharata
Bhīṣma lay dying.

37 Resplendent with gems
and jewels and gold,
in a thundercloud chariot
with the swiftest steeds,
bright flags fluttering,
came heroic Karṇa,

38 The brilliant bowman,
Adhiratha's son,
effulgent and handsome,
mahā-chariot-hero Karṇa –
looking like Indra
the rājā of the gods.

[VII:3:1-7]

Transcreated by P. Lal

## SECTION THREE

1 Mahātmā Bhīṣma lay on his arrowy bed
(said Sañjaya)
like an ocean sucked dry by mahā-storms
at the dissolution of the world.

2 Seeing their guru, the Pitāmaha
and Kṣatriya-annihilator Bhīṣma
felled by the supernatural weapons
of the mahā-archer Arjuna,

3 Their island of strength inundated,
your sons' hopes of victory
faded,
their armour was shredded.

4 He lay there riddled with arrows as numerous
as the waves of the Yamunā;
a Maināka mountain
pulverised by Mahendra-Indra.

5 He lay
like the sun
fallen from the sky,
like Vṛtra
routed
by Śatakratu-Indra.

6 Seeing the petrifier
of warriors
fallen
Seeing the finest
of brilliant bowman
the greatest warrior

7 Laid low
by the arrows
of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Seeing the mahā-vowed
bull-brave hero
on his bed of arrows

8 Seeing Bhīṣma,
Adhiratha's son Karṇa
alighted
from his chariot
in a perplexed
and grief-stricken mood.

9 With tears in his eyes
he offered *añjali*
and said gently:
"I am Karṇa.
I wish you well.
Speak to me, Bharata,

10 Sweet and auspicious words.
Look at me
with kind eyes.
It is clear
no one enjoys
the fruits of virtue,

11 Or why should you
an old man of dharma
be reduced to this?
In treasury management,
in counsel and strategy,
in weapons-skill,

12 I do not see
one Kaurava your equal.
O bull-brave Kaurava!
I do not see one
with your wisdom
who can save them now.

13 After slaying heroes
you have obtained
the realm of the *pitṛs.*
From today
like tigers killing deer
the infuriated

14 Pāṇḍavas
will slaughter the Kauravas.
O best of the Bharatas!
Today the twang
of the Gāṇḍīva bow
of Savyasācī-Arjuna

15 Will terrify the Kauravas
as the anti-gods were terrified
by Indra's thunderbolt.
Today the whizz
of the arrows
released from the Gāṇḍīva

16 Will frighten like thunder
the Kauravas and other
lords of the earth.
Like a mahā-forest fire
reducing trees
into heaps of ashes,

17 Diadem-decked Arjuna
will annihilate
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons.
Fire and wind
hand in hand
incinerate

18 Bushes and trees
and creepers wherever
they pass in the forest –
So Pārtha-Arjuna
is doubtless
the raging fire,

19 And Krishna,
O tiger-among-men,
the fanning wind.
The blare
of the Pāñcajanya,
the twang of the Gāṇḍīva

20 Will petrify
the Kauravas
on the field of battle.
The ape-emblemed chariot
as it advances
inexorably.

21 With a clatter like thunder
will remind the earth-lords
of Arjuna's terror.
Which earth-lord
but you
could withstand Arjuna?

22 The wisest men
praise the superhuman
deeds of Arjuna
who combated even
the three-eyed mahātmā
Trayambaka-Śiva.

23 From Śiva
he received
an arduous boon.
How can another
defeat Arjuna
when you failed?

24 You are endowed
with incredible valour;
you have defeated
the Kṣatriya-annihilator
Paraśurāma, who humbled
even gods and Dānavas.

25 I seek your permission
today to destroy
excellent Arjuna
who is venomous and fearful
and can kill with a glance
his bitterest enemy."

SECTION FOUR

1 Karṇa finished (continued Sañjaya),
and the Pitāmaha,
pleased, spoke these words
suiting time and place:

2 "Like the ocean
the refuge of rivers
Like the sun
the refuge of planets
Like truth
refuge of the virtuous
Like the fertile earth
refuge of seeds

3 Like rain-clouds
refuge of all created beings
Like thousand-eyed Indra
refuge of the gods –
So many you be
the refuge of your friends.

4 May you humble
the pride of your enemies
May you increase
the joy of your friends
May you be the refuge
of the Kauravas
As Viṣṇu is the refuge
of the gods.

5 Karṇa,
to please Duryodhana
you displayed your valour
and defeated the Kāmbojas
in Rājapura.

6 You defeated
the king of Girivraja, Nagnajit
and the rulers
of Ambaṣṭha, Videha and Gāndhāra.

7 Karṇa! You annexed
the territory of the Kirātas
in the Himālayas
and offered it to Duryodhana.

8 You routed
the Utkalas, Mekalas, Pauṇḍras, Kaliṅgas,
Andhras, Niṣādas, Trigartas, and Bāhlīkas.

9 Karṇa!
To please Duryodhana
your mahā-valour routed any number of peoples
in any number of lands.

10 Child! *Tāta*!
May you continue to be
the shelter of the Kauravas,
even as Duryodhana is,
and of their friends and well-wishers.

11 I bless you.
Go, fight your foes,
lead the Kauravas,
win victory for Duryodhana.

12 To us,
you are like Duryodhana:
our own grandson.
Dharma ordains
I wish you well
as I wish him.

13 O finest of men! The wise say:
Stronger than blood-kinship
is the bond between friends.

14 You are loyal to the Kauravas.
Their army is your army.
Be like Duryodhana, then:
Fight for it with all your might."

15 Vaikartana-Karṇa listened to Bhīṣma,
touched his feet,
and hurried to the field
where the bowmen were gathered.

16 A massive host!
Karṇa inspired them as they stood,
broad-chested, well-armed warriors,
ready for battle.

17 The Kauravas, led by Duryodhana,
were delighted,
seeing mahā-muscled

18 Mahātma Karṇa approaching them,
his mind prepared for battle.
They pūjā-respected him with slapping of arms,
victory-cries, leonine roars,
twanging of bowstrings,
and a variety of other fearful sounds.

## SECTION FIVE

1 O rājā! Duryodhana saw tiger-among-men Karṇa
seated in his chariot
(continued Sañjaya), and was overjoyed,
and he exclaimed:

2 "You are the perfect general.
Now my army is safe.
Plan a strategy
both beneficial and practical."

3 "O tiger-among-men," Karṇa replied,
"advise us, for you are wise.
Your interests are involved, O king,
you see better.

4 Besides, all these lords of men are eager
to hear you –
and I know you will never say
what is unjust."

5 Duryodhana said:
"Bhīṣma was our elder
brilliantly brave,
he knew the *śrutis,*
he had the support of our soldiers
and so was chosen our general.

6 He protected our army, Karṇa,
in this noble ten-days' war,
He was a mahātmā
who decimated our enemies.

7 Incredibly versatile Bhīṣma
has gone to the celestial region.
Who do you think, Karṇa,
is fit to take his place?

8 Without a general
an army is like
an unmanned ship.
O valiant-in-war hero –
it is unmanageable
and helpless.

9 An army without a general
is like a chariot
without a charioteer,
a ship without a pilot –
*akarṇa-dhārā*
*karṇa.*

10 An army without a general
is as vulnerable
as travellers without a guide
in an unknown land.

11 Select from among these mahātmā warriors
a leader
who will be the perfect substitute
for Śantanava-Bhīṣma.

12 The person you think fit
to be our general
will be our choice too –
unanimously."

13 "All these mahātmās," replied Karṇa,
"are worthy,
all are unparalleled heroes.
No need to choose.

14 By right of royal lineage
physical fitness
prowess
intelligence
unretreating valour
knowledge of the *śruti*-scriptures
they are all worthy.

15 Yet all cannot become generals.
Choose we must –
one who in our opinion excels
in every way.

16 It will demoralise the others
if you arbitrarily promote one –
they will think twice before fighting
for your sake.

17 Only one is undisputably worthy –
the finest of weapons-experts
the elder
the ācārya
the guru:
Droṇa.

18 When Droṇa is among us
the greatest arms-wielder
the equal of Śukra
the equal of Bṛhaspati
why look for another?

19 O Bharata! When Droṇa gives the order
to march
there is not one soldier here
not one in this gallery of rājās
who will refuse.

20 He is the finest of generals
the finest of arms-experts
the finest of intelligent men
– he is your guru, O rājā.

21 Just as the gods chose Kārtikeya
to lead them in battle
against the anti-gods
choose ācārya Droṇa
to be your leader in battle."

SECTION SIX

1 Rājā Duryodhana listened to Karṇa
(continued Sañjaya),
and, in the presence of the soldiers,
said to Droṇa:

2 "Your caste, your noble birth,
your knowledge of the scriptures,
your age, wisdom, bravery, skill, invincibility,
practical sense,

3 Your tapasyā, your sense of gratitude, seniority,
and other guṇa-virtues,
make you unique among the rājās
gathered here today.

4 Protect us as Indra of a thousand sacrifices
protects the gods.
With you as our leader,
we shall struggle for victory.

5 Like Kapāla among the Rudras,
Pāvaka among the Vasus,
like Kubera among the Yakṣas,
Vāsava among the Maruts,

6 Like Vasiṣṭha among the twice-born,
the Sun among effulgences
like Dharmendra-Yama among the *pitṛs,*
rājā-of-oceans Varuṇa amont water creatures,

7 Like the moon among the planets,
Uśanas among the Ditis,
are you among generals –
therefore, be our leader.

8 O faultless one! Like Indra routing the Danavas,
destroy our enemies
with eleven *akṣauhṇis* of soldiers
under your command.

9 Like Pāvaki-Kārtikeya commanding the gods,
command us,
and we will follow,
like bulls obeying their leader.

10 Powerful Arjuna too, despite his divine mahā-bow,
Will think twice when he sees you leading us.

11 O tiger-among-men!
Yudhiṣṭhira and all his friends and supporters
will be defeated if you decide
to be our leader."

12 When Duryodhana finished,
the earth-lords shouted
leonine cries –
"Victory to Droṇa!" –
that brought delight
to all your sons.

13 The assembled soldiers,
eager for fame,
joyfully praised Droṇa,
and honoured Duryodhana.
O rājā! Droṇa turned
and spoke to Duryodhana.

## SECTION SEVEN

1 "I know the Vedas
and their six branches,"
said Droṇa.
"I know artha
and its practical applications.
I know the weapons
of Trayambaka-Śiva,
I know the use
of many other weapons.

2 The qualities that you have praised in me –
I will deploy them all against the Pāṇḍavas
In the hope that your desire for victory be fulfilled.

3 But I will on no account kill Dhṛṣṭadyumna, O rājā,
For bull-brave Dhṛṣṭadyumna was created to kill me.

4 I will attack the enemy and kill the Somakas.
It will not please the Pāṇḍavas to have to face me."

5 With Droṇa's permission, O rājā,
your son
installed him general,
observing all the prescribed rituals.

6 As Indra and the gods in the past
installed Skanda,
Duryodhana and the kings made Droṇa
their general.

7 His installation was accompanied by loud,
joyful mahā-celebrations,
with conches blaring and musical instruments
being played.

8 With chanting of benedictions
and *svasti*-blessings
with songs of praise
from bards and minstrels

9 With shouts of victory
by the tiwce-born
with dancing and miming
the Kauravas anticipated
the rout of the Pāṇḍavas.

10 The mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa,
son of Bharadvāja,
marched with his troops
to the field of battle.

11 Jayadratha of the Sindhus, the Kalinga king, your
son Vikarṇa
Donned their armour to protect the southern flank.

12 Śakuni marched with a select division of cavalry
From Gāndhāra, armed with long, shining lances.

13 Kṛpa, Kṛtavarman, Citrasena, Viviṁśati,
Led by Duḥśāsana, covered the left flank.

14 Then the Kāmboja reinforcements, led by Sudakṣiṇa,
Galloped forward on swift horses, with the Śakas
and Yavanas.

15 The Madras, Trigartas, Ambaṣṭhas, Pratīcyas,
Udīcyas, Mālavas,
Śibis, Śūrasenas, Śūdras, Maladas,

16 Sauvīras, Kitavas, the warriors from East and South –
With Duryodhana at their head and Karṇa at the rear –

17 Encouraged their ranks with vociferous cheers.
Inspiring the army with fresh strength,

18 Vaikartana-Karṇa marched
with a host of bowmen.
His massive, radiant war-flag fluttered,
delighting all,

19 Its emblem the elephant-binding rope,
sun-bright its dazzle.
Seeing Karṇa,
the death of Bhīṣma

20 No longer dispirited the kings
and the Kaurava soldiers.
Confident once again,
the soldiers openly spoke out:

21 "The sight of Karṇa will terrify
all the Pāṇḍavas.
Karṇa has the śakti to rout
the Indra-led gods,

22 The puny Pāṇḍavas will present no problem
for him.
Bhīṣma was too gentle with them
in battle,

23 But Karṇa will destroy them
with his sharp arrows."
O lord of the world, they said this happily
to each other,

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24 And marched to battle, offering Rādheya-Karṇa
their pūjā-praise.
Meanwhile, Droṇa had formed
the Śakata battle-array.

25 O Bharata rājā! Our enemies had chosen
the Krauñca battle-tactic,
under the confident guidance
of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira himself.

26 At the head of their formation stood bull-brave
Viśvaksena-Krishna and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
with their ape-emblemed war-flag waving
its challenge.

27 That magnificent flag
of incalculably-powerful Pārtha-Arjuna,
the army's hub and refuge,
its tips touching the sun,

28 Seemed to illuminate the whole army
of mahātmā Yudhiṣṭhira.
It flamed like the earth-consuming sun
at the end of a yuga.

29 It seemed to make incandescent
the entire battlefield.
Among warriors Arjuna excels,
among bows the Gāṇḍīva,

30 Among created beings Vāsudeva-Krishna,
among *cakras* the Sudarśana.
The white-horsed chariot,
as if powered by four energies,

31 Stood at the head
of the enemy's war-formation,
like the dazzling *cakra* of Kāla.
Both mahātmās stood ready.

32 Karṇa was the spearhead of your army,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna of theirs.
Both eager for victory, blood-thirsty,
they angrily

33 Stared fixedly at each other –
    Karṇa and Pāṇḍava Arjuna.
Then the mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa
    advanced swiftly,

34 And the earth shook with the din
    of war-cries.
Thick swirls of dust rose,
    like soft reddish silk,

35 Blotting the sun in the cloudless sky,
    and a litter
of flesh, bones and blood
    splattered on the earth,

36 While vultures, eagles, cranes, *kaṅkas*
    and crows,
in thousands, circled and swooped over your army,
    O king.

37 Jackals howled in eerie and frightening wails,
    and skulked on the battlefield,
keeping your army
    on their right,

38 Hungering for human flesh
    and thirsting for human blood.
A burst of dazzling light,
    and strange sudden vibrations –

39 And meteor after meteor fell on the field,
    their tails scattering flame.
Lightning flashed
    and thunder emanated from

40 The massive orb of the sun
    as the army general Droṇa
marched to battle.
    Other awesome omens appeared,

41 Indicating the impending doom
    of the battling armies.
Then the clash of mutual slaughter
    between

42 The Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas commenced
with cacophonous confusion.
The Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas,
burning with anger,

43 Indiscriminately fell on each other
with their murderous weapons.
Charging straight at the Pāṇḍavas,
the brilliant mahā-bowman

44 Droṇa attacked like a fierce wind,
shooting hundreds of arrows.
Seeing Droṇa,
the Pāṇḍavas, together with the Sṛñjayas,

45 Stood firm, O rājā, and replied
with equally deadly counter-volleys.
The huge force of the Pāṇḍavas
was routed by Droṇa,

46 Along with the Pāñcālas,
like clouds by a stormy wind.
Employing a variety of supernatural weapons,
powerful

47 Droṇa quickly spread terror
among the Pāṇḍavas and Sṛñjayas,
Like the Dānavas decimated by Vāsava-Indra,
by Droṇa

48 Were slaughtered the Pāñcālas,
whose leader was Yājñaseni-Dhṛṣṭadyumna.
The mahā-chariot-hero Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
expert in supernatural weapons,

49 Oppressed Droṇa's forces repeatedly
with volleys of arrows.
Blocking the arrows of Droṇa,
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna

50 Fired his own missiles, spreading havoc
among the Kauravas.
Powerful Droṇa re-grouped his forces
and again

51 Launched a fierce attack on the ranks
of the Pārṣata prince,
pinning him down
with a tremendous arrow-shower,

52 Like Maghavat-Indra in a fit of anger
harassing the Dānavas.
Afflicted by Droṇa,
the Pāṇḍavas and the Sṛñjayas

53 Scattered, like deer attacked
by a charging lion.
Mighty Droṇa sliced through the Pāṇḍava ranks,
O rājā,
like a fiery *cakra*,
weaving circles in their midst.

54 In his excellent chariot
that sped through the field
like a flying city,
bristling with weapons,
its war-flags waving,
its rattle resounding,
its flagstaff polished
like a rod of crystal –
in this excellent chariot,
scattering terror
in the ranks of the Pāṇḍavas,
rode powerful Droṇa.

## SECTION EIGHT

1 The Pāṇḍavas were dazed by Droṇa's decimation
of their horses,
charioteers, chariots and elephants – and helpless
(continued Sañjaya).

2 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira said to Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and Arjuna:
"Strike quickly and check
jar-born Droṇa's fierce attack."

3 The mahā-chariot-heroes
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Arjuna,
and their followers,
rushed in a body against Droṇa."

4 The Kekaya princes, Bhīma, Saubhadra-Abhimanyu,
Ghaṭotkaca,
Yudhiṣṭhira, the twins, the Matsyas, Drupada's sons,

5 The five enthusiastic sons of Draupadī, Dhṛṣṭaketu,
Sātyaki,
Irate Cekitana, the mahā-chariot-hero Yuyutsu,

6 And all the other earth-lords, O rājā, who supported
the Pāṇḍavas
Performed remarkable feats suiting their skill and
lineage.

7 Seeing the Pāṇḍavas fortifying
their defence strategy,
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa stared at them
with angry looks.

8 Sitting in his chariot, invincible Droṇa,
in furious anger,
rushed at the Pāṇḍavas
like a storm scattering clouds.

9 He charged like a mad man,
old yet youthfully energetic,
destroying chariots, horses, soldiers, elephants
on all sides.

10 O rājā! His russet, throughbred horses,
swift like wind,
of inexhaustible energy,
radiated a blood-smeared brilliance.

11 Seeing the strict-vowed warrior charging
upon them like the final doom,
the Pāṇḍavas broke ranks
and fled.

12 Even in flight, they looked back at Droṇa,
or stood dazed briefly,
while the noisy chaos of battle
raged around them.

13 A roaring chaos that delighted heroes
and terrified cowards,
as it filled the space
between earth and sky.

14 Droṇa kept shouting his own name
and terrorising his enemies
as he rained volleys of arrows
at them.

15 O honour-bestowing monarch!
Old but agile Droṇa
pierced the ranks of the sons of Pāṇḍu
like Kāla embodied,

16 Screaming his war-cries, slicing off heads
and severing ornament-laden arms,
unmanning chariots
of their heroes.

17 O radiant lord! His screams, his arrows
struck terror in his enemies:
they stood like cows
shivering in winter.

18 The mahā-noise of his chariot's rattle,
bowstring-pulling and bow-twang
sent reverberating shudders
through space.

19 And thousands of arrows from his bow
obscured the major directions,
as they fell on horses, elephants,
chariots and soldiers.

20 The Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas attacked Droṇa
as he brandished his massive bow
and raged
like a weapons fuelled conflagration.

21 He sent elephants, horses and soldiers
to Yama's realm,
and soon the field of battle
was a welter of blood.

22 Droṇa's net of arrows,
reinforced by a wondrous display
of special weapons, seemed to envelop
all the directions.

23 As his chariot wove in and out
of horses, chariots, and soldiers,
his war-flag dazzled
like lightning in clouds.

24 Afflicting with arrows
the five Kekayas
and the Pāñcāla rājā,
untiring Droṇa
with his bow and arrows
attacked Yudhiṣṭhira.

25 Bhīmasena, Arjuna,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Sātyaki,
the ruler of Kāśi,
the son of Śaibya,
and Śibi himself, –
all attacked Droṇa.

26 Their arrows, repulsed
in midflight by Droṇa,
scattered the ground
like ripples and eddies
futilely striking
an unmoving island.

27 And gold-winged arrows
from the bow of Droṇa
penetrated the bodies
of horses and elephants
and stuck in the ground
with bloodied feathers.

28 The battlefield, littered
with bodies of soldiers
and horses and elephants
and demolished chariots,
appeared like the sky
blotted by clouds.

29 And Droṇa, inspired
by desire to increase
the good of your sons,
continued to harass
the forces of Bhīma,
Sātyaki and Arjuna,
the rājā of Kāśi,
the Pāñcāla king,
Abhimanyu and others.

30 With these feats, O rājā,
O Indra-of-the-Kauravas,
consuming this earth
like Kāla's doomsday sun,
mahātmā Droṇa
departed for heaven.

31 Drona, riding in his golden chariot,
killed hundreds
of thousands of Pāṇḍavas, and was killed
by Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna

32 Never-turning-his-back Droṇa,
after killing two *akṣauhiṇīs* of soldiers,
himself attained the final felicity
of heroes.

33 O rājā! Droṇa of the golden chariot
performed impossible feats,
and was cut down by the cruel and inauspicious
Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas.

34 When ācārya Drona fell,
O rājā,
creatures roared,
and soldiers roared,
and the noise filled the sky.

35 "Aho! *Dhik*!
The shame! The shame!"
The cry rose to the sky
reverberating
in the space between heaven and earth
and filling the main and subsidiary quarters.

36 The gods
The *pitṛs*
His friends –
All saw the mahā-chariot-hero
son of Bharadvāja
Droṇa
fall.

37 The Pāṇḍavas burst out
in victory shouts
roaring like lions.
The earth trembled
at their lion-roars.

## SECTION NINE

1 "What was Droṇa doing
when the Pāṇḍavas and Sṛñjaya
wounded him fatally?" asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
"He was super-excellent in war-weapons.

2 What happened? Did his chariot break down?
Did his bow crack?
Did he become careless,
and so lose his life?

3 *Tāta*! Dear one! How could Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
kill undefeatable Droṇa
who could fire endless volleys
of gold-winged arrows,

4 Who was the finest of the twice-born,
splendidly skilful,
adept in varied warfare,
capable of shooting at long distances,

5 Possessor of many supernatural weapons,
a mahā-chariot-hero
who performed the most wondrous feats
in battle?

[VII:9:6-14]

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6 It must be, then, that fate is more powerful
than human effort
if valiant Droṇa could be killed
by mahātmā Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

7 He knew the art of handling
the four kinds of weapons –
and yet you tell me
that ācārya Droṇa was killed.

8 The golden-charioted hero is gone!
His chariot
was covered with tiger-skins,
his head had the radiance of gold!
I cannot control my grief
today.

9 It is true, Sañjaya,
that another's calamity never kills –
for if it could, why does Droṇa's death
leave me stupidly alive?

10 Fate is above all, then;
and human effort futile.
It must be that my heart
is made of steel

11 Since news of Droṇa's death
does not shatter it
into a hundred pieces.
How could weapons expert Droṇa,

12 Whom Brahmins revered and princes honoured,
ever die?
Like an ocean drying up,
like Mount Meru slipping,

13 Like the sun dropping from the sky,
is Droṇa's death – unacceptable!
He punished the wicked
and protected dharma-followers.

14 He giave his life
for a pitiful person like me!
He who was the hope of victory
for my ill-minded sons,

15 Whose intelligence equalled that of Bṛhaspati
and Uśanas-Śukra –
how could he be killed?
His tawny, gold-caparisoned horses,

16 Swift as wind, harnessed to his chariot,
beyond the reach of all weapons,
strong, muscular,
trained Sindhu horses,

17 Hugely energetic – how could they get tired
on the battlefield?
Unafraid of trumpeting elephants
and the deafening blare of conches,

18 Of twanging of bowstrings,
volleys of arrows and missiles,
harbingers of sure victory,
untiring, pride-breathing creatures,

19 These fleet horses of Bhāradvāja-Droṇa's chariot –
how could they be defeated?
Such were the horses
of the golden chariot –

20 How could they fail to overcome
the Pāṇḍava forces?
Riding in that splendid,
all-gold-worked chariot,

21 What did Droṇa, son of Bharadvāja,
do by way of great feats?
His bowcraft was the refuge
of all –

22 What did that strong and truth-firm
Droṇa do?
He who was like Śakra-Indra,
who excelled all bowmen –

23 Which warriors dared to face
such a fantastic warrior?
Seeing Droṇa ensconced in his golden chariot,
did the Pāṇḍavas

24 Scatter in panic as the mahā-powerful hero
with divine weapons advanced?
Or did Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
and his brothers,

25 With Pāñcālya-Dhṛṣṭadyumna's help,
surround valiant Droṇa?
Pārtha-Arjuna must have created havoc
with his straight arrows,

26 And made it possible for wicked Dhṛṣṭadyumna
to attack Droṇa.
I cannot see how anyone
could have killed Droṇa,

27 Unless it was fierce Dhṛṣṭadyumna
with Kirīṭin-Arjuna's help.
All those great heroes – aiding and abetting
despicable Dhṛṣṭadyumna!

28 The Kekayas, Cedis, Karūṣas, Matsyas
and other earth-rulers
must have harassed the ācārya
like ants swarming on a snake,

29 And given scope to vile Dhṛṣṭadyumna
to kill Droṇa.
He who knew the four Vedas and their branches,
who was learned
in the fifth Veda-based discipline
of historical stories,

30 The foe-chastising refuge of Brahmins
as the ocean is of rivers,
who led simultaneously the life
of Kṣatriya and Brahmin –

31 How could such an experienced Brahmin
be killed with mere weapons?
In my pride I afflicted
the sons of Kuntī

32 Who deserved better – and Droṇa kept silent –
this is the fruit!
On whom all the brilliant bowmen
of the world depend –

33 How could such a person be killed
 by mere seekers of prosperity?
That mahā-powerful mahā-personality
 resembling Śakra-Indra in heaven –

34 How could they kill him,
 like petty fish killing a *timi*-whale?
Nimble-fingered, brave,
 indefatigable foe-smiter,

35 To fight whom was to surrender
 all hope of life,
he whom the following two sounds
 always accompanied –

36 The Vedic chant and the bowstring twang –
 he who was
as invincibly brave as a lion,
 as formidable as an elephant, –

37 I cannot see how such a lion-in-feats
 could be killed.
Sañjaya, how could a hero
 never-before-defeated

38 Be killed by Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
 in the presence of all those Indra-like men?
Who were the warriors entrusted
 with protecting Droṇa,

39 Who guarded his front,
 who guarded his rear?
Which heroes guarded the left and right
 of the mahātmā?

40 Who proceeded ahead of him
 as his special guards?
Who were committed to defending him
 to the death?

41 Which heroes attained the supreme felicity
 in the battle with Droṇa?
Which despicable Kṣatriyas,
 out of fear,

42 Though committed to protecting,
abandoned him and fled?
The hero who never turned his back,
no matter what the danger –

43 How could he have been killed
by the enemy forces?
Sañjaya, the duty of a man of āryan character
in a crisis

44 Is to show whatever courage he can summon.
This Droṇa did.
My mind is whirling, *tāta*, my child.
Do not speak to me, Sañjaya.
Let me get a grip on myself.
I will question you again."

## SECTION TEN

1 After questioning Sañjaya (said Vaiśampāyana),
grief-stricken Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
hope of victory gone,
slumped on the ground.

2 His female attendants saw him unconscious
and started fanning him
and sprinkling his face with cool,
sacred-scented water.

3 Seeing the mahārāja slumped
in his senseless condition,
the Bharata ladies soothed him gracefully
with their fingers.

4 The lovely ladies, voices thick with grief,
eyes in tears,
gently raised the rājā
and seated him on the throne.

5 He sat on the throne,
still dazed in the delirium of grief,
absolutely still,
while the lovely ladies fanned him.

6 The lord of the earth recovered his senses,
but he was still trembling.
He turned to Sañjaya
and questioned him further:

7 "Who succeeded in preventing
the never-defeated Yudhiṣṭhira,
who like the sun scatters darkness,
from attacking Droṇa?

8 Who charges like an elephant in rut
(whom no rival elephant can harm)
as he proceeds
to a she-elephant

9 For sexual enjoyment;
that finest of heroes
who has killed innumerable heroes
on the field;

10 That valiant mahā-hero,
intelligent and truth-firm,
whose fierce glances alone
can repulse Duryodhana's forces;

11 That killer-by-glances, always victorious,
that renowned hero,
that disciplined world-respected warrior –
which warriors stopped him?

12 Which of my warriors succeeded in attacking
that rājā son of Kuntī,
that finest of glory-filled tiger-brave
brilliant bowmen?

13 He who charged headlong at Droṇa,
he whose mahā-strength
makes him perform the grandest feats
with ease,

14 Whose stature is massive,
whose mahā-enthusiasm is unfading,
whose strength is that of ten thousand elephants –
Bhīma himself –
which of my warriors succeeded
in facing his attack?

15 And when the chariot-hero Arjuna
of supreme prowess
charged like a huge storm-cloud,
with thunderous force,

16 Scattering arrows as Maghavat-Indra sends rain,
and creating
fearful vibrations in the four quarters
with the rattle
of his chariot and the twanging
of his bowstring,

17 With his bow flashing
like a streak of lightning,
and his chariot wheels reverberating
like thunder,
and his arrows whistling
with awesome ferocity,

18 Whose anger was like a dark cloud,
whose speed was wind-swift,
who harassed his enemies
with sharp arrows,

19 Who filled all the quarters with blood,
like Death,
who horrendously poured
on the warriors of Duryodhana

20 A stream of stone-sharpened
and vulture-feathered arrows –
when Gāṇḍīva-wielding Arjuna came,
how did you react?

21 Tell me, how did you react
when the ape-bannered hero
descended upon you like an arrow-shooting,
sky-shrouding cloud?

22 Did your men flee in panic
when Arjuna advanced,
spreading terror by the very twang
of his Gāṇḍīva-bow?

23 Did Arjuna's arrows kill your men
like storm-winds scattering clouds?
Could any warriors survive
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's onslaught?

24 Who is there brave enough
to face the Gāṇḍīva?
The mere mention of Arjuna's name
is nerve-shattering.

25 In that soldier-terrorising
and hero-unmanning battle,
who stood firm by Droṇa,
and who fled out of craven fear?

26 Who were the ones that dared to face
the death-shape of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
the warrior who had conquered
even superhuman foes?

27 I know my soldiers are terrified
of the white-horsed hero,
and tremble before the rain-cloud rumble
of the Gāṇḍīva.

28 In my opinion, even the gods and anti-gods
cannot defeat the chariot
that Viśvaksena-Krishna drives
and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna rides.

29 Trim, young, brave, handsome, intelligent,
ingenious,
gifted with an excellent memory,
incapable of being defeated, that Pāṇḍava –

30 Such is Nakula. When he roared
his war-cries
and attacked Droṇa,
which warriors dared to prevent him?

31 When Sahadeva, like a venomous angry snake,
attacked Droṇa
as he stood there
harassing his Pāṇḍava enemies,

32 When strict-vowed, never-missing, invincible,
modest Sahadeva attacked,
which of your heroes had the courage
to face him?

33 The hero who routed the army
of the Sauvīra rājā
and took as his consort
his graciously gifted daughter Bhojā,

34 That inimitable bull-brave hero Sātyaki
who possesses
the virtues of truthfulness, patience, bravery,
and brahmacarya,

35 Who is enormously strong,
whose deeds are based on truth,
who is invincible, always optimistic,
who is a second Vāsudeva-Krishna,

36 Who under Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's guidance
has become a brilliant bowman,
who equals Arjuna in war-skill –
who protected Droṇa from him?

37 Sātyaki is the greatest Vṛṣṇi warrior,
their greatest bowman,
the equal of Paraśurāma in weapons-craft
and glory.

38 Just as the three worlds are concentrated
in Keśava-Krishna,
truth, patience, intelligence, fame, Brahma-war-skills
are in Sātyaki.

39 Even the gods are incapable of challenging
Sātyaki who has all the virtues.
Which of my soldiers dared to confront
such a mahā-bowman?

40 The Pāñcāla hero of noble birth,
admired by men of dignity,
that performer of distinguished feats,
that possessor of illimitable energy,

41 Dedicated to the welfare of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
born to do me harm,
equal of Yama, Vaiśravaṇa-Kubera, Āditya,
Mahendra-Indra or Varuṇa,

42 Celebrated as a mahā-chariot-hero,
ready to lay down his life fighting Droṇa –
which of my soldiers faced
valiant Dhṛṣṭadyumna

43 And Dhṛṣṭaketu, who deserted the Cedis
and joined hands with the Pāṇḍavas –
which of my warriors
blocked his advance against Droṇa?

44 And brave Ketumān, who killed Durjaya
at the foothills of Giri –
which soldier prevented him
from attacking Droṇa?

45 And tiger-like Śikhaṇḍin, who combined
the virtues and defects
of man and woman,
Yajñasena's son, always optimistic,

46 Who became the cause of the death
of mahātmā Devavrata-Bhīṣma –
which of my warriors intercepted
his attack on Droṇa?

47 The finest of excellent heroes, excelling in virtues
even Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
possessing weapons-lore, possessing truth,
brahmacarya, and more,

48 Vāsudeva-Krishna's equal in bravery,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's equal in strength,
resembling Āditya in radiance,
Bṛhaspati in intelligence,

49 Mahātmā Abhimanyu who resembles
gaping-mouthed Antaka-Yama –
which of my heroes prevented him
from attacking Droṇa?

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50 When that young and impulsive hero,
Subhadrā's foe-crushing son,
rushed at Droṇa,
how did you react?

51 When Draupadī's tiger-brave sons
rushed at Droṇa
like rivers plunging into the ocean,
which heroes dared to stop them?

52 The sons of Draupadī gave up games
and pleasures for twelve years,
studying war-skills
under strict-vowed Bhīṣma.

53 Kṣatraṁjaya, Kṣatradeva,
and honouring-others Kṣatravarman –
who stopped these three heroic sons of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
from attacking Droṇa?

54 And who dared to intercept mahā-bowman Cekitāna
when he rushed at Droṇa –
for his valour equalled that
of a hundred Vṛṣṇis?

55 Vṛddhakṣema's son Anadhṛṣṭi took by force
the princess of Kaliṅga –
which of my warriors dared
to confront him?

56 The five dharma-following, truly powerful
Kekaya princes,
with complexions pink like the *indragopa* insect,
clad in red armour,

57 Sons of the sister of the mother
of the Pāṇḍavas –
which of my soldiers prevented them
from killing Droṇa?

58 That lord of war whom the rājās
could not defeat
even after six months of bitter battle
in Vāraṇāvata,

59 That brilliant bowman, that powerful hero –
tiger-brave Yuyutsu –
which of my soldiers prevented him
from attacking Droṇa?

60 He who used a *bhalla*-arrow
to strike down
the womanising mahā-chariot-hero son
of the Kāśī rājā,

61 The mahā-bowman who advises Kuntī's sons,
who wishes harm to Duryodhana,
who was born to kill Droṇa –
Dhṛṣṭadyumna himself,

62 When he launched his devastating attack
on Droṇa –
which of my warriors dared
to face him?

63 That brilliant hero Śikhaṇḍin,
expert in every weapon of war,
reared in Drupada's lap –
who stopped him?

64 The mahā-chariot-hero who enfolded the earth
with the fierce rattle of his chariot,
just as a leather belt
wraps round the body,

65 Who in place of the usual sacrifices
celebrated ten horse-sacrifices
with liberal *dakṣiṇā*-gifts
of food and drink,
who governed his people
treating them like his own sons,

66 The grandson of Uśīnara who distributed
at his sacrifice
cattle as numerous as the grains of sand
on Gaṅgā's shores –

67 So that after the completion of the ritual
the gods said,
'No man has done or will ever do
such a feat' –

68 A king the like of whom
we have not seen
nor are likely ever to see
in the three worlds –

69 Such is the grandson of Uśīnara,
who will achieve realms
it is not possible for any mortal
to attain –

70 When that remarkable grandson of Uśīnara
named Śaibya
advanced like Antaka-Death at Droṇa –
who dared stop him?

71 Which of my warriors attempted to block
the chariot division of Virāṭa
as he drove straight
at Droṇa?

72 The mahā-powerful son
of wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma,
the instantly-born māyā-knowing rākṣasa
we all fear,

73 Who always endeavours for the success
of the Pāṇḍavas
and is a thorn in the flesh
of my sons –

74 Sañjaya, what is it they cannot do,
when such brave heroes
are ready to sacrifice their lives
for the Pāṇḍavas?

75 When tiger-among-men *Prabhu* Lord Krishna,
the wielder of the Śārṅga-bow,
is helping them, how can the Pāṇḍavas
ever be defeated?

76 Vasudeva's son
Krishna
in the worlds' supreme guru
the lord of the earth Lokanātha
the Eternal One Sanātana
he is Nārāyaṇa
the Divine One
the refuge of those
who fight on the battlefield.

77 The wise sing
his praises
his divine glory
I will also sing his praises
with bhakti
with a serene ātman."

## SECTION ELEVEN

1 "Listen, Sañjaya,"
said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"to the divine feats
of Vāsudeva's son
the feats of Govinda
which none else has achieved.

2 Even as a child, Sañjaya,
in the family of cowherds
mahātmā Krishna
revealed his might
to the three worlds.

3 He killed the horse-demon Keśī
who was strong and wind-swift
as Uccaiḥśravas
and who terrorised the woods
on the banks of the Yamunā.

4 In his childhood
with his two bare arms
he killed the Dānava
who came as a bull
bringing death to the cows.

5 Lotus-eyed Krishna
killed the mahā-anti-gods
Pralamba
Naraka
Jambha
Pīṭha
and Antaka-Death-like Mura.

6 Single-handed, Krishna
killed mahā-energetic Kaṁsa and his followers
though Jarāsaṁdha himself
had offered them protection.

7 The sovereign Sunāmā
tremendously powerful
lord of an entire *akṣauhiṇī*
second brother of Kaṁsa
the rājā of the Bhojas

8 Was killed with his army
of Śūrasena soldiers
by Krishna with the help
of Baladeva-Balarāma.

9 The inflammable sage Durvāsas
along with his wives
was placated by Krishna.
Pleased, he granted
many boons to Krishna.

10 Lotus-eyed Krishna
took by force the daughter
of the Gāndhāra rājā
after routing the earth-lords
at her *svayamvara.*

11 The bewildered rājās
were tied like horses
to the bridal chariot
and whipped into submission.

12 With the help of another
Janārdana-Krishna killed Jarasaṁdha
who was the mahā-muscled lord
of an entire *akṣauhiṇī*.

13 Krishna slaughtered
the Cedi rājā Śiśupāla
as he would a beast
when that huge-armed king
started disputing the *arghya*-offering.

14 With his tremendous prowess
Mādhava-Krishna flung the Daitya palace
of Sālva called the Saubha
situated in the sky
and considered invulnerable –
he flung it in the depths of the ocean.

15 Aṅga, Baṅga, Kaliṅga, Magadha, Kāśī, Kosala,
Vatsa, Garga, Karūṣa, Pauṅḍra and other lands –
he conquered.

16 Avanti, the southern territories, the hill tracts, Daśeraka,
Kāśmīra, Aurasika, Piśāca, Mudgala,

17 Kāmboja, Vātadhāna, Cola, Pāṇḍya,
Trigarta, Mālava, never-defeated Darada,

18 The Khasas and Śakas and many other peoples
Were defeated and annexed by blue-lotus-eyed
Krishna.

19 In the distant past
he penetrated the hide-out
of Varuṇa in the *makara*-infested ocean
and defeated him there.

20 After killing the Daitya antigod Pañcajana
in the Pātāla nether region
Krishna obtained
the divine conch Pāñcajanāya.

21 Mahā-powerful Krishna propitiated Hutāśana-Agni
by burning down the Khāṇḍava forest
with the help of Pārtha-Arjuna
and obtained
the fiery Āgneya-cakra.

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22 With Vinatā's son Garuḍa
as his vehicle
he terrorised the gods in Amarāvati
and took away the Pārijāta tree
from Mahendra-Indra's abode.

23 Indra tolerated this
for he knew the greatness of Krishna.
I know of no rājā
who has not accepted Krishna's supremacy.

24 For who else could do, Sañjaya,
what lotus-eyed Krishna did
so marvellously
in my assembly hall?

25 My bhakti has made me
see Krishna as the Lord Īśvara
I have known him
My eyes are opened
I see him in front of my eyes!

26 Sañjaya
who can exhaust
the glories of Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna
the wise and the valiant?

27 Gada, Sāmba, Pradyumna, Vidūratha,
Agavaha, Aniruddha, Cārudeṣṇa, Sāraṇa,

28 Ulmuka, Niṣaṭha, Jhilli, brilliant Babhru,
Pṛthu, Vipṛthu, Śamīka, Arimejaya –

29 These and other Vṛṣṇi heroes
skilled in the art of war
will join the Pāṇḍavas
on the battlefield

30 When urged by mahātmā Keśava-Krishna
the greatest Vṛṣṇi warrior
And I know then
the calamity that will face
the army of my sons.

31 Where Janārdana Krishna is
will Vanamāli-Halī-Rāma-Balarāma be
wearing his flower garlands
strong as two thousand elephants
armed with the plough
tall as Kailāsa hill.

32 Vasudeva's son Krishna
whom the twice-born call
the Father of all –
will he fight for the Pāṇḍavas?
Tell me, Sañjaya.

33 Sañjaya! *Tāta*! Dear one!
Who will dare challenge him
when he puts on armour
and takes his stand
on the side of the Pāṇḍavas?

34 If it should happen
that the Kauravas rout the Pāṇḍavas
then Krishna of the Vṛṣṇis
will wield his ultimate weapon
to save them from humiliation.

35 And the mahā-muscled hero
tiger-among-men
will annihilate the Kauravas
and offer the world
to the sons of Kuntī.

36 Is there any chariot
that can face the chariot
with Hṛṣīkesa-Krishna as driver
and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna as warrior?

37 It is not possible
for the Kauravas to win.
I see no way.
Tell me all about the battle.

38 Arjuna is the ātman
of Keśava-Krishna
Krishna is the ātman
of diadem-decked Kirīṭin-Arjuna
Arjuna is Vijaya is victory
forever and everlasting.

39

Arjuna is Bībhatsu
the invincible
dreadful-deed-doer
Krishna is Keśava
whose glorious guṇas
are countless.

40

Duryodhana is foolish:
he cannot recognise Keśava-Krishna.
His fate deceives him:
the noose of death surrounds him.

41

Duryodhana does not know
Krishna of the Dāśārhas
Arjuna of the Pāṇḍavas
are the primal mahātmā deities
Nara and Nārāyaṇa.

42

Their ātman is one:
they appear as two.
They are powerful
they are formidable
they are illustrious.
This entire army –

43

If they so wish –
they can wipe out instantly.
They refrain out of humaneness.
The worlds are agog
The yuga is stupefied

44

At the slaughter
of mahātmā Bhīṣma
and mahātmā Droṇa.
Neither *brahmacarya* nor study of the Vedas

45

Nor ritual performances
nor expertise in weapons
can save one from death.
Honoured by the worlds
expert in weapons
unbeaten in battle

46 Bhīṣma and Droṇa are dead.
Tell me, Sañjaya –
how is it I still live?
We who were jealous
of Yudhiṣṭhira's prosperity
in the past

47 Are denied that prosperity
for ever because
Bhīṣma and Droṇa are dead.
The doom of the Kauravas
is the fruit of my folly.
I know it now.

48 O Sūta! Like dry grass
consumed by lightning
are those who are ripe for death.
Yudhiṣṭhira will find
infinite fame
and prosperity now –

49 His fiery anger
has killed two mahātmās:
Bhīṣma and Droṇa:
Dharma has chosen
to favour Yudhiṣṭhira
and ignore my sons.

50 Cruel Kāla has come
for the doom of all.
No doubt of this.
*Tāta*! Dear one!
Wise men make plans
and fate breaks them.

51 What else? It's fate.
This is my experience.
Fate is all.
So give me details
of the terrible event,
the death of Droṇa.
A calamitous event,
an inconsolable grief –
but tell me all."

## SECTION TWELVE

1 I will tell you (Sañjaya said)
what I saw with my own eyes –
the sad story of Droṇa
killed by the Pāṇḍavas and Sṛñjayas.

2 The mahā-chariot-hero son of Bharadvāja,
appointed general of your forces,
said to Duryodhana
in the presence of all:

3 "O rājā, since you have chosen me
general of your army
after the fall of the bull-brave Kaurava,
river-born Bhīṣma,

4 It is fitting that you reap the fruits
of your decision.
What would you like me to do?
Command me, O Bharata."

5 Rājā Duryodhana consulted Karṇa,
Duḥśāsana and others,
and replied to the super-eminent
and invincible ācārya:

6 "The finest favour you can do me
is to capture alive
the great chariot-hero Yudhiṣṭhira
and bring him to me."

7 The ācārya of the Kurus heard this plea
of your son
and said these words,
which delighted the assembled soldiers:

8 "O rājā! Lucky is Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
that you desire
only his capture, and not his death
at my hands.

9 Why, O tiger-among-men Duryodhana,
have you not asked for his death?
Why are you unwilling to see him die
by my hand?

10 Could it be you feel Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
has no enemy?
Do you want him alive because you feel
for your race?

11 Could it be that you secretly wish
to return the kingdom
to the Pāṇḍavas
after defeating them?

12 Glory to Kuntī's son wise Yudhiṣṭhira –
the birth of that rājā was auspicious.
He is rightly known
as Ajātaśatru,
the 'One-without-an-enemy',
since you respect him so."

13 When your son heard these remarks of Droṇa,
O Bharata,
the natural feelings of his heart
found expression.

14 Even Bṛhaspati cannot suppress
what comes naturally.
Your son, suddenly and joyfully, O rājā,
spoke out:

15 "Ācāryā, if Yudhiṣṭhira were to die,
I cannot win.
For Pṛthā-Kuntī's other sons will surely
kill us all then.

16 Even the gods cannot kill
all the Pāṇḍava brothers.
If all the Pāṇḍavas were somehow
to be killed,

17 The entire maṇḍala of kings
will be surrounded,
and the earth
with all its seas and forests

18 Offered as a gift by Puruṣottama Viṣṇu-Krishna
to Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī or Kuntī.
Any surviving Pāṇḍava warriors will surely
kill us all then.

19 If vow-firm Yudhiṣṭhira is captured
and brought here alive,
we'll defeat him again at dice
and send them all to exile.

20 And so my victory can be enjoyed
for a long time, again.
That is why I do not want the death
of the Dharmarāja."

21 Realising the devious intent of Duryodhana,
discreet and wise Droṇa
thought it over and gave him
a modified boon.

22 "You can rest assured that Yudhiṣṭhira
will be captured and brought before you
if valiant Arjuna
does not come to his aid.

23 Even the gods led by Indra,
united with the anti-gods,
cannot face Arjuna;
nor do I wish to confront him.

24 True, he is my student,
I taught him the use of weapons.
He is young, he does good deeds,
he is persevering;

25 He has obtained weapons from Indra
and Rudra-Śiva,
and you have provoked him, O rājā.
I will not confront him.

26 Do what you can to lure him away
from the field of battle.
Pārtha-Arjuna absent,
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira is finished.

27 His capture, not his death, O bull-brave hero,
is the way to your victory.
Let this be the device to bring about
his capture.

28 O rājā, I can capture that rājā
of truth and dharma
and without fail bring him
into your presence

29 If he decides to oppose me on the battlefield,
but only of course
if you can arrange to isolate Kuntī's son
tiger-among-men Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

30 But if Phālguna-Arjuna is present, O rājā,
the gods and anti-gods
jointly under Indra will not be able
to capture Yudhiṣṭhira."

31 This assurance of Droṇa
regarding the capture of rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
delighted your supremely simple-minded son,
who took it as accomplished.

32 Your son knew that Droṇa was partial
to the Pāṇḍavas,
so, to bind him to his word,
he made public the promise.

33 Droṇa's assurance regarding the capture
of the eldest Pāṇḍava,
O gracious honour-bestowing monarch,
was circulated by Duryodhana
in all the army camps where his soldiers
prepared for battle.

## SECTION THIRTEEN

1 The assurance of Droṇa to capture
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
(continued Sañjaya), when announced
to your soldiers,

2 Enthused them to utter leonine roars,
O Bharata,
and slap their arm-pits noisily.
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira

3 Was informed of Bhāradvāja-Droṇa's promise
by his secret spies.
Summoning his brothers and the kings
of his army,

4 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira said to Dhanañjaya-Arjuna:
"Tiger-among-men,
you have heard of the plan
that Droṇa has in mind.

5 Act then to frustrate his design.
It is true
that foe-crushing Droṇa
has added a condition,

6 But the condition relates to you,
O mahā-muscled mahā-archer!
Today, therefore, see that you are always
by my side,

7 So that Duryodhana's scheme through Droṇa
does not succeed."
Arjuna replied, "I can never agree
to kill my ācārya,

8 And I can never desert you
when you need me.
I am ready to give up my life on the field,
O Pāṇḍava,

9 Than be guilty of harming
my own ācārya.
By capturing you, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son hopes
to win the kingdom,

10 But he will never be able to do so
in this world.
The starry sky will crash,
the earth will shatter,

11 But so long as I live,
Droṇa cannot capture you.
Vajṛabhṛt-Indra himself can come down
with his thunderbolt,

12 Viṣṇu can come with all the gods,
O Indra-among-rājās,
but so long as I live,
you need not fear

13 Droṇa who is expert in all weapons,
or anyone else.
O Indra-among-rājās,
my decision is unbreakable.

14 I cannot recall ever lying,
I cannot recall ever being defeated.
I cannot recall ever being untrue
to any promise I have made."

15 Mahārāja, in the camp of the Pāṇḍavas
(continued Sañjaya),
conches and drums and *mṛdaṅgas* and *ānakas*
were sounded.

16 There was shouting
and lion-like roaring
by the mahātmā Pāṇḍavas
And the noise
of the twanging of bowstrings
and slapping of arm-pits
reached the very skies.

17 Hearing the mahā-deafening challenge
of the Pāṇḍava forces,
your soldiers also started playing
on their war instruments.

18 O Bharata! They deployed themselves –
your soldiers and theirs –
into battle ranks, and advanced slowly
for the fray.

19 A tumultuous battle!
A horripilating clash!
A ghastly encounter
between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas
between Droṇa and the Pāñcālas.

20 The Sṛñjaya warriors tried hard
to overcome the army of Droṇa
but failed
because Drona's presence was invincible.

21 Nor could the chariot-heroes
of your son's army
pierce the Pāṇḍava defence
headed by diadem-wearing Kirīṭin-Arjuna.

22 The two armies
one protected by Droṇa
the other by Arjuna
stood on the field
like two huge forests
breaking into blossom
in the stillness of the night.

23 Then, O rājā,
Drona in his golden chariot
hurtled effortlessly
through the Pāṇḍava ranks
laying waste their soldiers.

24 The Pāṇḍavas and Sṛñjayas
in their terror
saw that single chariot-hero
piercing swiftly through their ranks
like relentless innumerable heroes.

25 His fear-instilling arrows
sped in all directions
demoralising the army
of Pāṇḍu's son Yudhiṣṭhira.

26 Like the sun at noon
sucking energy with a hundred rays
was Droṇa
dispiriting the Pāṇḍava soldiers.

27 O Bharata! Just as the Dānavas
did not dare look at Mahendra-Indra,
the army of Yudhiṣṭhira
did not dare look at angry Droṇa.

28 The magnificent hero Bhāradvāja-Droṇa
paralysed the Pāṇḍava ranks
and created havoc
in Dhṛṣṭadyumna's division.

29 Shrouding the sky
and blocking the directions
his straight and swift arrows
unerringly pierced
to the heart of the Pāṇḍava-division
where Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna stood.

## SECTION FOURTEEN

1 Like a forest-fire
reducing trees to ashes
(continued Sañjaya)
Droṇa spread mahā-terror
in the ranks of the Pāṇḍavas.

2 Seeing the flaming hero
of the golden chariot
reducing their division
to ashes
the Sṛñjayas shivered.

3 They heard the twang of his bow
like distant thunder
rumbling again and again
and they trembled.

4 Fierce arrows issued
from his dexterous fingers
decimating chariot-heroes and cavalry
elephants and horses
and foot-soldiers.

5 When summer ends
dark clouds blown by strong winds
pour down rain
So Droṇa
poured torrents of arrows
that terrified
the hearts of his enemies.

6 O rājā
he wove in and out
of the ranks of the enemy
circulating waves of fear
wherever he attacked.

7 Like flashes of lightning
lighting up dark thick clouds
his golden bow
flashed intermittently
in his speeding cloud-chariot.

8 Droṇa
hero of truth
and intelligence
and dharma
made a river flow on the field
like a river
that flows
at the end of a yuga.

9 A river of wrath
the wrath of Droṇa
A river infested
with flesh-eating creatures
A river flowing
with waves of soldiers
A river devouring
its troop-filled banks

10 A river whose waters
were streams of blood
A river whose whirlpools
consisted of chariots
A river whose shores
were horses and elephants
A river whose boats
were coats of mail
A river whose mire
was human flesh

11 A river whose sands
were bones and marrow
A river whose bubbles
were glittering turbans
A river whose clouds
were clashing missiles
A river whose fish
were splintered spears

12 A river uncrossable
because of the corpses
of soldiers and beasts
A river whose momentum
was the speed of the arrows
A river whose logs
were dead bodies
A river whose tortoises
were all the chariots

13 A river whose lotuses
were scattered heads
A river whose fish
were glinting swords
A river whose islands
were chariots and elephants
A river whose ornaments
exceeded all counting

14 A river whose whirlpools
were mahā-chariot-heroes
A river undulating
with waves of dust
A river uncrossable
by the faint-hearted
A river forded
by the brave and the strong

15 A river whose flow
was clogged by corpses
A river haunted
by vultures and *kaṅkas*
A river that carried
mahā-chariot-heroes
in thousands upon thousands
to the abode of Yama

16 A river whose snakes
were shattered lances
A river whose water-fowl
were living soldiers
A river whose mahā *haṁsa*-swans
were shredded Kṣatriyas
A river whose small birds
were fallen diadems

17 A river whose turtles
were wheels of chariots
A river whose sharks
were massive maces
A river whose arrows
were little fishes
A river of swarming
crows and vultures and jackals

18 O excellent rājā
A river transporting
hundreds of soldiers
killed by Droṇa
to the realm of *pitṛs.*

19 A river choked
with countless corpses
A river whose weeds
were corpses' hairs . . .
Such was the river
fearful to cowards
that Droṇa created O rājā
on the field of battle.

20 Then the forces of the Pāṇḍavas
led by Yudhiṣṭhira
screamed and attacked
the mahā-chariot-hero
Droṇa.

21 Your brave and distinguished soldiers
stood firm
absorbing the shock
of the assaulting warriors.
A horripilating clash!

22 Śakuni
master of a hundred mayā-deceptions
clashed with Sahadeva
wounding his charioteer
and shredding his war-flag
with sharp arrows.

23 Incensed Sahadeva
harassed Saubala-Śakuni with sixty arrows
and wounded his charioteer and horses
after slicing his bow and flag.

24 Śakuni
lifted a mace
leapt out of his excellent chariot
and with one stroke O rājā
knocked Sahadeva's charioteer
out of his vehicle.

25 O rājā
the two powerful chariot-heroes
brandishing maces
roamed the field
like two high-peaked hills.

26 Droṇa
wounded the Pāñcāla-rājā Drupada
with ten swift arrows
which Drupada reciprocated –
then he fired another volley of arrows.

27 Bhīmasena
harassed Viviṁśati with twenty sharp arrows
but Viviṁśati stood firm.
An incredible show of bravery!

28 Mahārāja
in a sudden fierce attack
Viviṁśati sliced Bhīma's horses and bow and flag.
The soldiers watched and applauded.

29 Unable to tolerate
the feat of his opponent
Bhima lifted his mace
and slaughtered Viviṁśati's splendid horses.

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30 O rājā
Like one musth elephant
charging another musth elephant
powerful Viviṁśati
with shield and sword
jumped off his horseless chariot
and lunged at Bhīma.

31 Smiling Śalya
as if playing a game
pierced his dear nephew Nakula
with arrows
in an effort to rouse him to anger.

32 Illustrious Nakula
took it calmly
and blew his conch
after slicing Śalya's charioteer and horses
and bow and umbrella and war-flag.

33 Dhṛṣṭaketu
split the arrows of Kṛpa
and harassed him with seventy shafts –
with three more arrows
he shredded Kṛpa's emblemed flag.

34 Kṛpa
retorted with a deluge of arrows
that cornered Dhṛṣṭaketu
while twice-born Kṛpa
kept up the attack.

35 Sātyaki
wounded Kṛtavarman in the chest
with a *nārāca*-arrow
and followed it up with seventy more
lacerating Kṛtavarman's body
and smiling as he did so.

36 Kṛtavarman of the Bhojas
replied with seventy-seven sharp arrows
but Sātyaki remained unaffected
as a mountain remains unmoved
by swift winds.

37 Dhṛṣṭadyumna the general
grievously wounded Suśarmā
who retaliated
by hurling a dart
at Dhṛṣṭadyumna's shoulder-joint.

38 Virāṭa
with his force of Matsya soldiers
attacked
Vaikartana-Karṇa.
An awe-inspiring combat!

39 Karṇa the Sūta's son
performed a marvellous feat
by holding the entire army of Virāṭa
at bay
with a deluge of knotted arrows.

40 Rājā Drupada
clashed with Bhagadatta.
Mahārāja
their duel was an incredible one.

41 Bull-brave Bhagadatta
fired knotted arrows
that pinned down rājā Drupada
making his charioteer and his war-flag
their targets.

42 Infuriated Drupada
pierced the chest
of the mahā-chariot hero Bhagadatta
with a knotted arrow.

43 Meanwhile
the two all-excelling arms-expert heroes
Śikhaṇḍin and Saumadatti-Bhūriśravas
were locked in a combat
that terrified the world's creatures.

44 O rājā
Puissant Bhūriśravas
fired a deluge of arrows
at the mahā-chariot-hero Yājñaseni-Śikhaṇḍin.

45 O Bharata lord of the world
Angry Śikhaṇḍin
retaliated with ninety arrows
that shook the composure
of Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas.

46 The two terror-spreading rākṣasas
Ghaṭotkaca and Alambuṣa
were locked in a fierce duel!
each bent on victory.

47 Manufacturing a hundred māyā-manoeuvres
strutting with pride
each hankering for victory
they fought a fascinating battle
with their māyā-power.

48 Cekitāna
grappled with Anuvinda
as Śakra-Indra grappled with Bala
two mahā-powerful adversaries
in the dreadful clash
of the gods and anti-gods.

49 Lakṣmaṇa
grappled with Kṣatradeva
as in the distant past O rājā
Viṣṇu grappled with Hiraṇyākṣa.

50 O rājā!
Paurava
shouting fiercely
from his swift-horsed excellently-decorated
chariot suddenly attacked Abhimanyu.

51 Abhimanyu
crusher of foes
always eager for battle
mahā-powerful warrior
stepped forward.
A horrendous mahā-combat followed.

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52 Paurava
released a massive arrow-shower
Abhimanyu
sliced his flag and bow and umbrella.

53 Abhimanyu
wounded Paurava
with seven swift arrows
and with five more
harassed his charioteer and horses.

54 Roaring like a lion
and delighting his soldiers
Abhimanyu
selected an arrow
sure to kill Paurava.

55 Kṛtavarman
saw Abhimanyu fix that fearful arrow
and quickly with two arrows
shattered it and the bow.

56 Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu
annihilator of his foes
flung away the broken bow
and jumped off his chariot
with a sword and shield.

57 Waving
the star-embossed shield
and brandishing his sword
Abhimanyu
sped across the field
with a dazzling display of skill.

58 O rājā
Whirling
his sword
Flashing
his shield
Leaping
in anger
Shaking
in strength

Till sword
and shield
and Abhimanyu
seemed one.

59 Shouting
he sprang
inside Paurava's chariot
Gripping
Paurava by the hair
he dragged him out.

60 With one kick
he killed Paurava's charioteer
With his sword
he sliced Paurava's flag-pole –
Like Tārkṣya-Garuḍa
flinging aside an ocean-snake
Abhimanyu
threw off Paurava.

61 The earth-lords
saw dishevelled Paurava
lying like an unconscious ox
at the mercy of a lion.

62 Jayadratha
was unable to tolerate
the sight of supine Paurava
dragged cruelly by Ārjuni-Abhimanyu.

63 Brandishing
a sword
and a cock-embossed shield
tinkling with a hundred small *kiṅkiṇī*-bells
Screaming
he jumped off his chariot.

64 Krishna's nephew Abhimanyu
saw Jayadratha of the Sindhus
and forgetting Paurava
swooped like a hawk from his chariot.

65 Krishna's nephew Abhimanyu
whirled his sword and shield
and warded off
the lances and axes and swords
aimed at him.

66 That powerful hero
displayed his tremendous strength
and lifting high his mahā-sword and shield

67 Advanced towards
Vṛddhakṣatra's son Jayadratha
the bitter enemy of his father
like a tiger attacking an elephant.

68 Eagerly and fiercely
they fought with swords
like a tiger and a lion
mauling each other with fangs and claws.

69 Two lion-heroes
waving and striking
with sword and shield
blurred to sameness
with perfect equal skill –

70 Lift of sword
and descent of sword
Thrust of sword
and block and parry –
A perfect blur
of well-matched heroes.

71 Two mahātmā heroes
lunging and retreating
with identical skill –
Two tall hills
with resplendent wings.

72 As illustrious Saubhadra-Abhimanyu
lifted his sword
to strike
Jayadratha
hit at Abhimanyu's shield.

73 The massive sword
stuck in the dazzling shield –
As Sindhu-rājā Jayadratha pulled it
it broke in two.

74 With broken sword
Jayadratha jumped six steps back
and in a flash
was inside his chariot.

75 All the rājās
surrounded Kārṣṇī-Abhimanyu
who was disinterestedly
sitting in his chariot.

76 Mahā-powerful Abhimanyu
valiant son of Arjuna
stared at Jayadratha
and whirled his sword and shield
and screamed his war-cry.

77 Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu
destroyer of heroic enemies
ignoring Jayadratha of the Sindhus
harassed Jayadratha's soldiers
like the summer sun
scorching the earth.

78 It was then that Śalya
hurled his *śakti*
a fearful missile
of iron and gold
that flashed like a streak of fire.

79 Like Vinatā's son Garuḍa
swooping on a snake
Kārṣṇī-Abhimanyu caught the missile
and unsheathed his sword.

80 All the rājās
burst into applause
and screamed a leonine roar
at the incredible dexterity
of illimitably energetic Abhimanyu.

81 Subhadrā's son
annihilator of heroic enemies
with all his force
reversed the shining and begemmed missile
at Śalya.

82 The missile swung and sped
like a skin-sloughed snake
and struck Śalya's chariot
killing his charioteer
and knocking Śalya of the vehicle.

83 Virāṭa, Drupada, Dhṛṣṭaketu, Yudhiṣṭhira,
Satyaki, the Kekaya princes, Bhīma, Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Śikhaṇḍin.

84 Nakula and Sahadeva, and Draupadī's sons said,
*"Sādhu! Sādhu!* Excellent! Excellent!"
The whistle of arrows
and leonine war-cries

85 Filled the field
and delighted never-retreating Abhimanyu.
Your sons were angered
by the victory of their enemies,

86 And desperately sent a deluge of arrows,
mahārāja,
on the Pāṇḍavas, like clouds drenching hills
in torrents.

87 It was then that foe-crushing Śalya,
remembering the fall of his charioteer
and eager to please your sons,
angrily attacked Saubhadra-Abhimanyu.

## SECTION FIFTEEN

1 “Sañjaya,” said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
“how beautifully you describe
the duels and combats.
I feel jealous of those who have sight.

2 As they do of the war
between the gods and anti-gods,
men will marvel at the war
of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas.

3 I can never tire of the story
of this wonderful battle.
Tell me what happened
between Śalya and Abhimanyu.”

4 Śalya (continued Sañjaya)
saw his charioteer killed
and brandishing an iron mace
he leapt out of his chariot
shouting in anger.

5 Bhīma
face him with a mace
that looked like a thunderbolt
and challenged Śalya
who blazed like the fires of Kāla
or like rod-wielding Antaka-Yama.

6 Abhimanyu
also picked up a thunderbolt mace
and shouted “Come, Śalya, come!”
but Bhīma held him back.

7 Bhīma
held Saubhadra-Abhimanyu back
and stood ready for Śalya
like an inflexible mountain.

8 Śalya
rājā of the Madras
saw mahā-powerful Bhīma advancing
with the speed of a tiger
pouncing on an elephant.

9 Trumpets blew thousands of them
Conches blared thousands of them
Drums thudded thousands of them
Mahā-war-screams roared on the battlefield

10 "*Sādhu! Sādhu!*"
"Excellent! Excellent!"
rose from hundreds upon hundreds
of Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas
poised for battle.

11 Among all those rājās O Bharata
there was none who could face
the ferocity of Bhīmasena
except the ruler of Madra.

12 In this world
there was none who could face
the mace-charge of mahātmā Śalya
except wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma

13 Bhīma's massive mace
intricately worked with gold filigree
delighted and inspired the soldiers
with its blazing effulgence.

14 Śalya
and wolf-waisted Bhīma
swung their maces dazzlingly
and circled each other warily
in maṇḍala-patterns of combat.

15 Śalya
and Bhīma
brandished their maces
and circled in maṇḍala-strategy
like two snorting bulls.

16 Swinging
and weaving in maṇḍalas
and shirling their maces
the two lion-brave heroes
were perfectly matched.

[VII:15:17-24]

Transcreated by P. Lal

17 The mahā-fearful mace of Śalya
striking against Bhīma's
emitted sparks
and shattered into fragments.

18 The mace of Bhīmasena
striking against Śalya's mace
sparkled like a tree
on a monsoon night
flickering with fireflies.

19 O Bharata descendant
The Madra rājā
flung a second mace
that lit up the sky
like a shower of sparks.

20 The mace of Bhīmasena
decimated Śalya's soldiers
like a mahā meteor
on its obliterating course.

21 The two marvellous maces
locked against each other
were like two Nagā-kanyā snake-girls
spitting venom.

22 Like two mahā tigers
scratching and clawing
Like two mahā-elephants
goring with tusks
The two heroes circled
battling with maces.

23 Blood-spattered
they stood on the field
smashed and gory
the two mahātmās
like two *kiṁśuka*-flames-of-the-forest.

24 As the tiger-brave heroes battled
in all direction the noise
of the thudding maces
like Śakra-Indra's thunderbolt
could be heard.

25 Battered
by the Madra-rājās mace
on his right and left
like a hill by a thunderbolt
Bhīma still stood firm.

26 Bludgeoned
by the mace of Bhīma
the mahā-powerful ruler of the Madras
stood firm
like a bolt-battered hill.

27 They raised
their maces
They struck
with vigour
They manoeuvred
in wary maṇḍalas.

28 They leapt
eight steps forward
They clashed
like two elephants
They battered
each other
with steel-rod strength.

29 Weakened
by the blows
of the wounding maces
they collapsed
on the earth
like two shattered flagpoles of Indra.

30 Kṛtavarman
the mahā-chariot-hero
sped to the rescue of Śalya
who lay semi-conscious
panting heavily.

31 Mahārāja
he saw Śalya mace-battered and faint
sighing and puffing like a snake.

32 Kṛtavarman the mahā-chariot-hero
quickly lifted the Madra-ruler
inside his chariot
and sped away from the battlefield.

33 Mahā-muscled Bhīma
though groggy like a drunk
rose swiftly to his feet
and stood on the field
clutching his mace.

34 O honour-bestowing monarch
Your sons saw the Madra ruler flee
and they trembled in fear
though backed by elephants and horses
and chariots and foot-soldiers.

35 Pāṇḍava-panicked
the soldiers of your army
fled helter-shelter
like clouds scattered by a storm.

36 After defeating O rājā
the army of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
the Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes
blazed like radiant flames on the field.

37 They were overjoyed
they blew their conches
they shouted leonine cries
they beat drums and *mṛdaṅgas* and cymbals.

## SECTION SIXTEEN

1 O rājā (continued Sañjaya),
seeing your army panicking,
Vṛṣasena single-handed used māyā-weapons
to stem the rout.

2 Countless arrows sped from the bow
of Vṛṣasena
in all ten directions, wounding soldiers, horses,
chariots and elephants.

3 Mahārāja, like the rays of the sun
in summer,
hundreds of mahā-shafts
sped from his bow.

4 Pierced by them, mahārāja,
chariot-heroes and horses
toppled and fell,
like trees uprooted in a storm.

5 O rājā! That mahā-chariot-hero succeeded
in fatally wounding
hundreds and thousands of elephants,
chariot-heroes and horses.

6 Seeing him dominate the battlefield,
all the rājās
organised their forces to surround
the fearless hero.

7 Nakula's son Śatānīka
attacked and wounded Vṛṣasena
with ten deep-piercing *nārāca*-arrows.

8 Karṇa's son Vṛṣasena
retaliated by splitting his bow
and shredding his war-flag.
Draupadī's other sons
rushed to their brother's rescue.

9 Their arrow-deluge
obscured Karṇa's son.
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
attacked them with fierce war-cries

10 Mahārāja
and harassed Draupadī's sons
with a multiplicity of arrows
that cascaded like rain
from clouds atop a mountain.

Transcreated by P. Lal

11 The Pāṇḍavas
showed their affection for their sons
by leading Pāñcālas and Kekayas
and Matsyas and Sṛñjayas
to the thick of the battle.

12 The resulting battle
between your soldiers and the Pāṇḍavas
resembled the clash
between the gods and the Dānavas.
Bloodthirsty and hair-raising!

13 The heroes
of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas
fought bitterly and fiercely
in furious enmity.

14 Anger-agitated
the bodies of those heroes
throbbed like Garuḍa in the sky
or like passionate snakes.

15 The bloody locales
of the clashes with Bhīma,
Karṇa, Kṛpa, Droṇa, Aśvatthāman,
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Sātyaki
glowed like the doomsday sun of Kāla.

16 A fearful battle
like that of the gods and the Dānavas
in which mighty warriors clashed
with equally mahā-powerful opponents.

17 Yudhiṣṭhira's army
with a cacophonous din as loud
as the roaring of an agitated ocean
fell upon your army
whose mahā-chariot-heroes had fled.

18 Seeing his army
demoralised and decimated
by the assaults of the Pāṇḍavas
Droṇa shouted:
"Stay firm, heroes!"

19 A surge of anger
welled up in Bhāradvāja-Droṇa.
He rubbed his bowstring
and fitted a massive arrow

20 And aiming his bow
he said to his charioteer:
"Charioteer, drive me quickly

21 To where he is
under his beautiful white umbrella –
Rājā Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

22 I will stop Yudhiṣṭhira
from further harassment of our ranks.
*Tāta*, to the Pāṇḍava arrow-showers

23 I am immune,
and to their allies – the Matsyas,
Pāñcālas and Somakas. With my help,
Arjuna has obtained mahā-weapons.

24 Even Bhīma and Sātyaki
are afraid to meet me in combat.
Bībhatsu-Arjuna's excellent bow-skill
is the result of my training.

25 Even Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
has weapons learnt under my guidance.
*Tāta*! Heroes aspiring for victory
should have no qualms.

26 Keep heaven in mind
and fight with strength and zeal!"
Inspired by the words of Droṇa,

27 His charioteer Aśvahṛdaya
urged the horses forward.
The resplendent golden chariot
advanced in a blaze

28 The Karūṣas, Matsyas, Cedis, Sātvatas,
The Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas rushed to block Droṇa.

29 Infuriated Droṇa
drove his tawny-horsed chariot
like a four-tusked elephant
straight into Yudhiṣṭhira's army.

30 Yudhiṣṭhira fired
a volley of sharp *kaṅka*-feathered arrows.
Droṇa splintered his bow and attacked.

31 Kumāra of the Pāñcālas
protector of Yudhiṣṭhira's chariot-wheels
stood against Droṇa
like the sea-shore against the sea.

32 "*Sādhu! Sādhu!*"
"Excellent! Excellent!" exclaimed the heroes
when they saw brave twice-born Droṇa
contained by the valour of Kumāra.

33 Angered Kumāra
penetrated Droṇa's chest with an arrow
and burst into fierce war-cries
like those of a victorious lion.

34 Not only did mahā-powerful Kumāra
stem the advance of Droṇa
but succeeded in wounding him
with thousands of excellent arrows.

35 But bull-brave twice-born Droṇa
killed that protector of Yudhiṣṭhira's chariot-wheels
that brave and distinguished Kumāra
who was versed in mantra-lore.

36 Twice-born bull-brave Bhāradvāja-Droṇa
assumed the role of your army's saviour
by piercing the Pāṇḍava ranks
and spreading havoc among the enemy.

37 Droṇa pierced
Śikhaṇḍin with twelve arrows
Uttamaujas
with twenty
Nakula
with five
Sahadeva
with seven

38 Yudhiṣṭhira
with twelve
the sons of Draupadī
with three each
Sātyaki
with five
Virāṭa of the Matsyas
with ten.

39 One by one
he harassed the Pāṇḍava heroes
and spread terror in their midst.
Then he concentrated on Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
with a plan to capture him.

40 O rājā
as anger-driven Droṇa attacked
like a tempest-swollen ocean
it was Yugandhara who opposed
the Bhāradvāja mahā-chariot-hero.

41 But Droṇa
stepped up his relentless attack on Yudhiṣṭhira
with knotted arrows
and simultaneously unchariotted Yugandhara
with a broad-head *bhalla*-arrow.

42 Virāṭa, Drupada, Kekaya, Sātyaki, Śibi,
Vyāghradatta of the Pāñcālas, valiant Siṁhasena –

43 These and other warriors, to rescue Yudhiṣṭhira,
Blocked Droṇa's advance with a deluge of arrows.

44 Vyāghradatta of the Pāñcālas O rājā
harassed Droṇa with fifty polished arrows
and burst into a loud shout.

45 Siṁhasena
wounded the mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa
and burst into peals of laughter
that terrified the other mahā-chariot-heroes.

46 Rolling his eyes
twanging his mahā-bowstring
and slapping his arms
Droṇa attacked Siṁhasena.

47 Powerful Droṇa
with two fiercely-fired *bhalla*-arrows
cut off Siṁhasena's ear-ringed head
as well as the head of Vyāghradatta.

48 After decimating
the Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-heroes with his arrow-deluge he approached the chariot of Yudhiṣṭhira
like the god-of-death Antaka-Yama.

49 Strict-vowed Droṇa O rājā
pulled up his chariot near Yudhiṣṭhira.
Loud wails rose from Yudhiṣṭhira's soldiers:
"The rājā is dead!"

50 The soldiers witnessed
the prowess of Droṇa and said
"The desire of rājā Duryodhana is fulfilled.

51 This very instant
Droṇa will subdue Pāṇḍava-Yudhiṣṭhira
and joyfully bring him captive
before us and Dhārtarāṣṭra-Duryodhana."

52 In the meantime
even as the soldiers were murmuring
the mahā-chariot-hero Kaunteya-Arjuna
advanced in his chariot
with sky-shattering wheel-reverberations.

53 The slaughter he caused
became a flowing river
whose water
was blood
whose whirlpools
were chariots
whose blocking stones
were bones and corpses –
a river transporting
creatures to the spirit-world –

54 Whose bubbles
were arrows
whose fish
were lances.
Crossing that river
Pāṇḍava Arjuna advanced
blinding the Kauravas
with the speed of his attack.

55 Diadem-decked Arjuna
attacked the soldiers of Droṇa
with a mahā-bewildering shower of arrows.

56 Between the stringing
and the firing of each arrow
by illustrious Kaunteya-Arjuna
no time was lost –
or so it seemed to the assembled soldiers.

57 Arrows everywhere – mahārāja!
the sky and the quarters and the earth –
nothing was visible –
only the swarms of arrows.

58 Nothing visible – O rājā! –
only a mahā-dismal darkness
on the field of battle
caused by the Gāṇḍīva-wielder Arjuna.

59 When the sun set
and darkness covered the earth
no one could distinguish
between friend and foe.

60 Droṇa and Duryodhana
and others recalled their soldiers.
Believing that his foes were dispirited
and unwilling to battle further,

61 Bībhatsu-Arjuna also
withdrew his soldiers.
Delighted, the Pāṇḍavas, Sṛnjayas,

62 And Pāñcālas
praised Pārtha-Arjuna with sweet words
like ṛṣis praising the sun.

63 With Keśava-Krishna's help, retired to his tent
With all his soldiers as dusk fell.

64 Sitting in his emerald-
and-ruby-and-diamond-
decorated chariot,
with carvings of gold
and silver and coral
and crystal artistry,
Arjuna was as radiant
as the moon in the sky
with its cluster of stars.

## SECTION SEVENTEEN

1 Lord of the earth (continued Sañjaya),
the soldiers
retired to their camps,
according to rank and station.

2 After ordering his soldiers to withdraw,
Droṇa felt ashamed
and, turning to Duryodhana,
he said:

3 "Did I not tell you
that if Dhanañjaya-Arjuna helps Yudhiṣṭhira
even the gods will not be able
to take Yudhiṣṭhira alive on the battlefield?

4 You attacked Arjuna –
and he humbled all of you.
Listen to me again:
Krishna and Arjuna cannot be defeated.

5 But if somehow O rājā
white-horsed Arjuna can be separated
from Yudhiṣṭhira on the battlefield
we may still take Yudhiṣṭhira prisoner.

6 Let one among you
be responsible for luring Kaunteya-Arjuna
away from Yudhiṣṭhira.
Force Arjuna to fight and defeat him.

7 O king
during the period of Arjuna's absence
I will cut through the Pāṇḍava ranks
and take Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira captive
in the very presence of Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

8 If all by himself
without any support from Arjuna
Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira desides to face me
I promise to make him my prisoner.

9 Mahārāja
if Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
has no Arjuna to come to his aid
he and his followers will be captured,

10 Unless they decide
to run away from the field.
And if he decides to flee
what greater victory can we hope for?"

11 These words of Droṇa
inspired the Trigarta-ruler Suśarmā
and his brothers to say (continued Sañjaya):

12 "O rājā
the wielder of the Gāṇḍīva-bow
has often humiliated us
though we have never harmed him.

13 These insults
haunt us and make us sleepless
and anger's fire rages in us.

14 It is our luck
that Arjuna will be our target today
and provide us the chance
to satisfy our long-cherished desire.

15 You will be pleased
and we will achieve great fame.
We will trick Arjuna away from battle
and kill him.

16 The earth today
will witness the loss of Arjuna
or the loss of the Trigartas.
This is our vow. We will keep our vow."

17 O Bharata! Satyaratha and Satyavarman spoke similarly,
As did Satyavrata, Satyeṣu and Satyakarman.

18 Mahārāja
the five brothers took this vow
and retired for the night
with their ten thousand chariots.

19 The Mālavas, the Tuṇḍikeras with thirty thousand chariots,
The tiger-among-men Prasthala-ruler Suśarmā of the Trigartas,

20 The Mavellakas, the Lalitthas and Madrakas,
With ten thousand chariots of the five brothers,

21 Along with ten thousand and more chariots
from many kingdoms,
all came forward to take the oath
and provide help.

22 They lit sacred fires
each kindling one for himself
and sat on mats of *kuśa*-grass
in their splendid armour.

23 Wearing their armour
they sat on *kuśa*-grass mats
rubbed ghee on their bodies
which had *mourvi* belts
Heroes all of them
who in earlier sacrifices
had given away incalculable *dakṣiṇās*,

24 Heroes of innumerable *yajñas*
blessed with many sons
deserving the realms of the pious
dedicated doers of duty
ready to lay down their lives
for glory and victory,

25 Heroes eager
to attain the holy realms
that *yajñas* with large *dakṣiṇās* provide
or death on the battlefield provides
or the strictest brahmacarya
or intense study of the Vedas,

26 Heroes all of them
who had gratified Brahmins
with liberal gifts of gold coins
and garments and cattle –
Heroes all of them
they spoke gently to each other

27 And lit the sacred fire
and took the oath on the field
And repeated the oath
in front of the sacred fire

28 While the Brahmins
chanted benedictions
and granted blessings
and touched water
in front of the sacred fire.

29 In the presence of all
they repeated their profound promise
clearly intoned
to bring about the death of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

30 "The realms
to which liars go
The realms
for Brahmin-killers
The realms
for drunkards
and for one
who sleeps with his guru's wife

31 The realms
for a stealer of a Brahmin's wealth
or a disloyal enjoyer
of a rājā's favours
The realms
of a man who spurns a refuge-seeker
or a murderer
of one who seeks help

32 The realms
of an arsonist
of a cow-killer
The realms
of a malice-monger
or one who harbours
ill-will towards Brahmins

33 The realms
of one who foolishly abstains from intercourse
with his wife in her season
or of one who has sexual intercouse
on the day of a *śrāddha*
or of one who debases his ātman

34 The realms
of one who misappropriates whatever
is left with him in trust
or of one who abuses knowledge
or one who fights with eunuchs and cowards
or one who mixes with the mean

35 The realms
of the *nāstika* negative thinkers
or those who abandon
the sacred fire and their parents
or those
who lay waste a fertile field
or those who indulge
in deliberate wickedness –
May all these regions
be ours

36 If we return
from the field of battle
without killing Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Or if out of fear
we turn our backs to the field
and flee.

37 If however
we succeed in our mission
and perform the impossible task
it is certain
we shall attain the realms
reserved for the pious and godly."

38 Saying this O rājā
they advanced to the field
and challenged Arjuna to battle
in the southern part.

39 Pārtha-Arjuna
tiger-among-men and destroyer-of-hostile-cities
challenged by them
said to Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira:

40 "My principle is:
I never refuse a challenge, O rājā.
These do-or-die *saṁśaptaka*-heroes
are challenging me to mahā-combat.

41 Suśarmā and his brothers
are challenging me to battle.
Grant me permission
to advance and kill them.

42 O bull-among-men
I never refuse a challenge.
You can take it from me
these enemies are as good as dead."

43 Yudhiṣṭhira said:
"Child, *tāta,* you know Droṇa's intentions.
Do what you think is best
to frustrate his plans.

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44 Droṇa
is brave and skilled in all weapons
he is resourceful and untiring
he has vowed to take me prisoner."

45 Arjuna replied:
"Satyajit will protect you today, O rājā.
So long as this Pāñcāla prince lives
the ācārya cannot succeed.

46 If tiger-brave Satyajit
by any chance should fall
do not stay on the field O *prabhu*-lord
though surrounded by your soldiers."

47 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
gave Arjuna the requested permission.
He embraced Phālguna-Arjuna
and looked lovingly at him
and blessed him.

48 Powerful Pārtha-Arjuna
marched to meet the Trigarta-ruler
like a famished lion
pouncing on a herd of deer.

49 Duryodhana was delighted by this,
and manoeuvred his army fiercely
to attack and capture Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
left unprotected by Arjuna.

50 Both armies
clashed
with the violence
of the waters
of the Gaṅgā
and Sarayū
clashing
in swollen frenzy
in the monsoon.

SECTION EIGHTEEN

1 O rājā! The do-or-die *saṁśaptakas* (said Sañjaya)
stood joyfully on the field,
their war-chariots arranged
in a moon formation.

2 When they saw diadem-wearing Arjuna
advancing swiftly,
the tiger-brave *saṁśaptakas* shouted war-cries,
O gracious monarch.

3 Their roars rose to the sky
and the main and subsidiary quarters.
So crowded was the field
that there were no echoes.

4 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna noticed the suicide squad
was in high spirits;
he smiled to himself and, turning to Krishna,
said

5 "Son of Devakī
look at the Trigarta brothers!
Instead of crying at their coming death
they are exhilarated with celebration!

6 And why not?
This is a time for celebration
for soon enough they will attain the realms
that can never be attained by cowards."

7 Saying this to Krishna
mahā-muscled Arjuna turned his attention
to the ranks of the Trigartas
poised in battle-formation.

8 Picking up the conch
know as the Devadatta
a god-gifted dazzle of gold
he blew into it mahā-fiercely
till the four quarters shuddered.

9 Stunned by the sound
the do-or-die *saṁśaptakas*
froze in their chariots
as if turned into stone.

10 The motionless army O excellent Bharata
looked beautiful on the field
as if painted by a consummate artist.

11 The blare of the conch
thundered through the sky
and the earth and the oceans
and deafened the concourse of soldiers.

12 Their horses froze
with wide-open eyes
with necks and ears and lips petrified
passing urine and vomiting blood.

13 Quickly recovering
and urging their soldiers
the *saṁśaptakas* fired a volley
of *kaṅka*-feathered arrows at Arjuna.

14 Arjuna dexterously
fired fifteen wind-swift arrows
that neutralised the volley in mid-flight.

15 They retaliated
with each firing ten polished arrows
and Arjuna countered
with three sharp arrows for each.

16 O rājā
they again fired five arrows each
and Pārtha-Arjuna again
retaliated with two for each warrior.

17 In a fit of anger
they loosed a swarm of arrows
at Arjuna and Keśava-Krishna
like rainfall swelling a lake.

18 Thousands of arrows
swarmed on Arjuna
like bees in a forest
on flowering trees.

19 With thirty arrows
fashioned from the hardest flint
Subāhu dented the diadem
of ambidexterous Savyasācī-Arjuna.

20 The polished arrows
with golden wings
stuck in his diadem
and Arjuna glittered
with the glory of the rising sun.

21 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
sliced Subāhu's finger-protector
with a broad-headed *bhalla*-arrow
and deluged him with shafts.

22 Suśarmā and Suratha
Sudhanvat and Sudharma
wounded diadem-wearing Kirīṭin-Arjuna
with ten arrows each.

23 Ape-emblemed Arjuna
retaliated with an arrow-shower
and demolished their golden flagstaffs
with *bhalla*-arrows.

24 Slicing Sudhanvat's bow
Arjuna killed his horses with arrows.
Then he swiftly decapitated Sudhanvat.

25 Sudhanvat's death
bred fear in his followers' hearts.
They panicked and fled to Duryodhana.

26 Indra's son Vāsavi-Arjuna
in a destructive fury
massacred his enemies with arrows
like sunrays dispelling darkness.

27 With Arjuna
in the grip of fierce anger
and their soldiers scattered and fleeing
the Trigartas lost all hope.

28 Pārtha-Arjuna's knotted arrows
harassed and debilitated them
and they scampered from the field
like a panicky herd of deer.

29 The Trigarata-rājā
angrily admonished the mahā-chariot-heroes:
"Do not panic!
Do not give in to fear!

30 In front of all
you took your solemn vows.
How will you face the leaders
of Duryodhana's army in such shame?

31 For this act
the whole world will mock us!
Let us unite
and once again march to battle!"

32 Hearing this O rājā
they shouted their war-cries
and blew loudly on their conches
each restoring confidence in the other.

33 The do-or-die *saṁśaptakas*
re-formed themselves for battle
and prepared for death
along with the Nārāyaṇī cowherd contingent.

## SECTION NINETEEN

1 Seeing the *saṁśaptakas*
re-grouped for another battle
Arjuna said to mahātmā Vāsudeva-Krishna

2 "Hṛṣikeśa-Krishna
drive my chariot to the *saṁśaptakas.*
It seems they are resolved to fight
until they are made lifeless.

3 Observe then
the marvellous skill of my arms and bow:
I will kill them today
as furious Rudra-Śiva kills the world's
creatures."

4 Krishna smiled
and spoke auspiciously to Arjuna.
He drove the chariot
exactly where Arjuna commanded.

5 The white-horses chariot
dazzled on the battlefied
like a splendid sky-flying vehicle.

6 In circular maṇḍalas O rājā
or backward and forward
the chariot moved like Śakra-Indra's vehicle
in the battle of gods and anti-gods.

7 The Nārāyaṇī soldiers
vowed to die or succeed
obscured Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
with showers of arrows.

8 In an instant O bull-brave Bharata
it seemed that Krishna
and Kuntī's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
had completely vanished.

9 Bursting with anger
Phālguna-Arjuna summoned double his strength
and rubbed clean his Gāṇḍīva-bow
before lifting it high.

10 Frowning in anger
Arjuna put the mahā-conch Devadatta
to his lips and blew into it fiercely.

11 Arjuna released
the multi-massacring Tvāsṭṛ-weapon
and immediately a host of forms
sprang from the special weapon.

12 Totally bewildered
by the countless duplicates of Arjuna
the soldiers killed each other
thinking their assailant to be Arjuna.

13 "This is Arjuna!"
"This is Govinda-Krishna!"
"This is Pāṇḍu's son!"
"This is the Yādava descendant!"
So babbling
they foolishly slaughtered each other.

14 Stupefied by the weapon
they glittered on the battlefield
like so many flames-of-the-forest
and they slaughtered each other.

15 That ghastly weapon
devoured the arrows of the enemy
and transported the warriors
to the abode of Yama.

16 Dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna smiled
and slew with his arrows
the bellicose Lalitthas
and the Mālavas and Māvallekas and Trigartas.

17 Doomed to die by calamitous Kāla
the Kṣatriyas let loose a volley of arrows
at persecuting Pārtha-Arjuna.

18 Neither Arjuna
nor his chariot nor Keśava-Krishna
could be seen behind that cloud-burst of arrows.

19 Thinking their arrows
had found their target they shouted
"Krishna and Arjuna are dead!"
and joyfully waved their garments.

20 They sounded thousands
of drums and *mṛdaṅgas* and conches
and screamed leonine war-cries.

21 Krishna perspiring
exclaimed "Are you there, Arjuna?
I do not see you, Pārtha. Are you alive?"

22 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna heard
and quickly dispersed the arrow-clouds
with his Vāyavya wind-weapon.

23 Bhagavān Vāyu
the wind-god blew across the field
sweeping *saṁśaptakas* and horses
and elephants and chariots and weapons
as if they were dry leaves.

24 Scattered by Vāyu O rājā
they shot up like birds from trees
at early dawn.
A beautiful sight, O gracious monarch!

25 Spreading havoc
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna skilfully fired sharp arrows
that slaughtered hundreds of thousands.

26 His *bhalla*-arrows
pierced heads and weapon-wielding arms
and shredded soldiers' thighs
as strong as the trunks of elephants.

27 Backs lacerated
legs mutilated
arms and backs and eyes
pierced –
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna mangled
all his enemies.

28 His arrows demolished
chariots as huge as Gandharva cities
equipped with the finest weapons
together with elephants and soldiers.

29 Clusters of chariots
with their flagstaffs smashed
littered the field
like palmyra trees shorn of their tops.

30 Elephants armed
with flags and hooks and lances
collapsed like hills
split open by Śakra-Indra's thunderbolt.

31 Pārtha-Arjuna's arrows
struck horses with yak-like tails
and they fell with their riders
blinded and disembowelled.

32 Their swords slipping
from their grasp
Their armour
shredded
Their body joints
smashed
The soldiers fell
mangled and mutilated.

33 Warriors
dead or dying
fallen or falling
spinning or still –
a gruesome spectacle
on the battlefield!

34 The dust-cloud cleared
with the flow of blood
The ground became slushy
with the gore of headless bodies.

35 Bībhatsu-Arjuna's chariot
readiated horror
like the chariot of Rudra-Śiva
on the day of doom
when all creatures perish
on the playground of the cosmos.

36 Slaughtered by Pārtha-Arjuna
soldiers and horses and chariots and elephants
seemed to rush in a body
to the otherworld of Śakra-Indra.

37 O excellent Bharata
the field of battle
strewn with the corpses of mahā-chariot-heroes
glowed like the region of *preta*-spirits.

38 While Savyasācī-Arjuna
was locked in battle with the *saṁśaptakas*
Droṇa in full war-array
attacked Yudhiṣṭhira.

39 The veteran warriors
attacked with a single purpose:
to capture Yudhiṣṭhira alive.
A horrendous tumultuous mahā-clash followed.

## SECTION TWENTY

1 O Indra-among-rājās (continued Sañjaya)
the mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa,
after the night had passed
conferred with Suyodhana-Duryodhana,

2 And made plans for the clash between
the *saṁśaptakas* and Pārtha-Arjuna.
So while Pārtha-Arjuna battled
with the suicide squad,

3 Droṇa re-organised his soldiers, O excellent Bharata,
to attack the Pāṇḍava forces
with the single aim of taking prisoner
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

4 Seeing Bharadvāja's son Droṇa plan
the Suparṇa-Garuḍa-strategy,
Yudhiṣṭhira deployed his forces
in a semi-circular maṇḍala.

5 The mahā-chariot-hero Bhāradvāja-Droṇa
was Garuḍa's beak
Rājā Duryodhana and his brothers
its head
Kṛtavarman and Gautama
its eyes.

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6 Bhūtaśarman, Kṣemaśarman, valiant Karakāśa,
Kaliṅga, Siṁhala, the Easterners, Abhīras, Daśerakas,

7 Śakas, Yavanas, Kāmbojas, Haṁsapathas,
Śūrasenas, Daradas, Madras, Kekayas – were its neck

8 With their elephants, horses, chariots and foot-soldiers.
Bhūriśravas, Śalya, Somadatta and Bāhlika,

9 With an *akṣauhiṇī* of soldiers, defended the right flanks.
Vinda and Anuvinoda of Avanti and Kāmboja-rājā Sudakṣiṇa,

10 Stationed in front of Aśvatthāman, defended the left.
At the back were Kaliṅgas, Ambaṣṭhas, Magadhas, Pauṇḍras, Madrakas,

11 Gāndhāras, Śakunas, Easterners, hill-dwellers, and Vasātis.
The tail comprised Vaikartana-Karṇa, with his sons and relatives,

12 Supported by a massive contingent from various territories.
Jayadratha, Bhīmaratha, Sampāti, Ṛṣabha, Jaya,

13 Bhūmiṁjaya, Vṛṣakratha, and the powerful Niṣadha ruler,
Sworn to attain on the field the realm of Brahmā,

14 Formed the chest of veteran, valiant soldiers, O rājā.
Droṇa's battle-array of horses, chariots, elephants, and foot-soldiers

15 Seemed to undulate like storm-whipped ocean waves.
Battle-eager soldiers from its wings and flanks

16 Advanced like clouds threatening thunder and lightning.
From the centre of the formation, the elephant-riding Prāgjyotiṣa-ruler

17 Dazzled, O rājā, like the dawn in his resplendent armour.
Flower-garlanded, under a white umbrella, O rājā,

18 He shone like the full moon in conjunction with the Kṛttika constellation.
His rutting elephant, with ichor streaming like black antimony,

19 Looked like a huge hill washed by a monsoon downpour.
Surrounded by countless rulers from various hilly regions,

20 He looked like Śakra-Indra surrounded by the gods.
Seeing that massive superhuman array, Yudhiṣṭhira

21 Said to Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna, in the midst of that invincible force:
"*Prabhu*-lord!
You who are driven by pigeon-white steeds!
Plan a tactic today
to frustrate the strategy of the Brahmin Droṇa."

22 Dhṛṣṭadyumna replied:
"Truthful-vowed one!
Droṇa will never be able to lay hands on you
for I will fight Droṇa and his followers.

23 O Kaurava!
Do not fear so long as I am alive.
Droṇa cannot defeat me."

24 Saying this (continued Sañjaya)
Drupada's valiant son Dhṛṣṭadyumna
drove his pigeon-white horses towards Droṇa
showering a deluge of arrows as he charged.

25 Seeing a sight
not very auspicious in front of him
Droṇa was fleetingly disheartened.

26 Mahārāja
Dhṛṣṭadyumna was born to kill Droṇa.
Seeing him Drona was duped by his own death-dharma.

27 Your foe-crushing son Durmukha
in order to please Droṇa
placed himself as a barrier to Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

28 O Bharata! A tremendous clash!
A deadly encounter between
battle-hungry Dhṛṣṭadyumna and brave Durmukha.

29 Dhṛṣṭadyumna quickly
pinned down Durmukha with an arrow-net
and blocked Droṇa's advance with an arrow-shower.

30 Seeing Droṇa blocked
your son rushed to his defence
and stupefied Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
with a fierce retaliating arrow-shower.

31 While they fought –
the Pāñcāla prince and the excellent Kuru –
Droṇa's arrows decimated Yudhiṣṭhira's forces.

32 Like thick clouds
dispersed by a vehement wind
Yudhiṣṭhira's forces were scattered by Droṇa.

33 For a brief while
the clash appealed and inspired
and then it became O rājā
a horrendous free-for-all between madmen.

34 None could tell
who was enemy and who friend
and the battle continued O rājā
by guesswork and code words.

35 The gems
on the soldiers' headgear and necklaces
on their armour and ornaments
glittered like the rays of the sun.

36 On the field
the horses and elephants and chariots
with their waving flags
looked like huge cloud-masses
with rows of cranes flying alongside.

37 Men killed men
horses trampled horses
chariot-heroes slaughtered chariot-heroes
elephants crushed elephants.

38 A fearful clash
occurred suddenly between beflagged elephants
and their huge rivals charging at them.

39 Huge creatures
hurtling against each other
tusk-ripping each other!
Sparks and smoke scattered
from the ferocity of the friction!

40 Their flags toppled
the elephants with spark-producing tusks
stood like huge clouds
lighting up the sky with lightning.

41 They charged
and grappled and dragged and gored.
They fell and their corpses
littered the field like autumn clouds.

42 The agonised trumpeting
of the arrow-and-spear-mangled elephants
was like the rumbling of clouds
during a storm.

43 Some elephants screamed
and others ran amok
their bodies pierced with arrows and spears.

44 Some elephants
ravaged and torn by tuskers
roared like the roaring of clouds
on the day of dreadful dissolution.

45 Some elephants
pushed back by stronger rivals
were hooked and goaded back to battle
and crushed everything in their path.

46 Mahouts attacked mahouts
with arrows and *tomara*-spears
and they toppled off elephant-backs
unclutching their hooks and weapons.

47 Riderless elephants
roamed wildly on the field
like broken segments of cloud
till they toppled and fell.

48 Massive elephants roamed
as if looking for their mates
with dead and dying
weaponless warriors on their backs.

49 In that massacre
elephants fell shrilling piteously
dead or dying
mangled with spears and swords and axes.

50 As elephant bodies
thudded on the ground
the earth shook
and seemed to moan.

51 Littered with carcases
of mutilated elephants
and mahouts and shattered flagstaffs
the earth looked as if humped with hills.

52 Battered by *bhalla*-arrows
fired by mahā-chariot-heroes
mahouts and their beasts toppled
scattering their lances and hooks.

53 Some elephants
fatally wounded with long arrows
screamed like *krauñca* cranes
and crushed both friends and foes.

54 The field of battle O rājā
was a welter of flesh and blood
from the carcases of chariot-warriors
and horses and elephants.

55 Ripped apart by tusks
wheel-less and with-wheel chariots
lay on the field upturned
with their mahā-chariot-heroes trapped inside.

56 Chariots without riders
horses without horse-warriors
elephants with their mahouts dead
fled in panic on the battlefield.

57 In that clash
father killed son and son killed father
and the battle continued
blurring all distinctions.

58 The bloody mire
was ankle-deep and soldiers in it
looked like tall trees whose lower trunks
burn fiercely in a forest fire.

59 All was bright red:
umbrellas and coats of armour
garments and flagstaffs
dripping with blood.

60 Rolling chariot-wheels
ran over the prostrate bodies
of chariot-heroes and horses
chopping them in small pieces.

61 An ocean of soldiers
resembling an ocean of gross grandeur
with elephants its currents
dead heroes its floating weeds
and chariots its whirlpools.

62 Victory-wishing warriors
sailed on that ocean in chariot-boats
careless of their lives
even when their boats sank.

63 All the warriors
were smothered in showers of arrows
yet all fought on with hope
though their identification marks were shredded.

64 In the confusion
of that wild and gory battle
Droṇa eluded his assailants
and rushed straight at Yudhiṣṭhira.

## SECTION TWENTY-ONE

1 Seeing Yudhiṣṭhira within range (said Sañjaya),
fearless Droṇa.
pinned him down with a ceaseless stream
of arrows.

2 A cacophonous confusion
spread through the army of Yudhiṣṭhira
like panic in a herd of elephants
whose leader is mauled by a mahā-lion.

3 Truly valiant Satyajit
led a fierce sortie
to contain Droṇa
when he saw the ācārya harassing Yudhiṣṭhira.

4 Mahā-powerful ācārya Droṇa
and the prince of the Pāñcālas
were instantly locked in deadly combat
like Indra and Virocana's son Bali.

5 Truly heroic Satyajit
used his splendid weapons
and pinned down Droṇa with a sharp arrow.

6 He struck Droṇa's charioteer
with five snake-venomous death-like arrows
and made him unconscious.

7 He wounded Droṇa's horses
with ten of his swiftest arrows
and in a fury shot ten arrows each
at both the reserve charioteers of Droṇa.

8 Weaving maṇḍala-manoeuvres
foe-annihilating Satyajit
fiercely sliced the flagstaff of Droṇa.

9 Foe-crushing Droṇa
saw the feats of Satyajit on the field
and thought: *His time has come.*

10 Ācārya Droṇa
shattered Satyajit's bow and arrows
and wounded him
with ten body-penetrating life-sucking shafts.

11 O rājā
heroic Satyajit fitted another bow
and fired thirty *kaṅka*-feathered arrows
at Droṇa.

12 Seeing Droṇa's advance
on the field blocked by Satyajit
the Pāñcāla hero Vṛka
harassed Droṇa with hundreds of arrows.

13 O rājā
seeing the mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa worsted
by the deluge of arrows
the Pāṇḍava soldiers shouted
and waved and flapped their garments.

14 Powerful Vṛka
in a fit of rage smashed sixty arrows
in Droṇa's chest.
And unbelievable feat, O rājā!

15 The mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa
chafed under the arrowy deluge
and expanded his eyes in mahā-anger.

16 Droṇa retaliated
by splintering the bows of Satyajit and Vṛka
and with six arrows
killing Vṛka and his charioteer and horses.

17 But Satyajit
quickly strung another tougher bow
and pierced Droṇa and his charioteer
and horses and flagstaff with many arrows.

18 Droṇa smarted
under the Pāñcāla prince's attacks
and fired arrows with intent to kill.

19 Thousands of arrows!
Arrows that struck the horses and flagstaff
the bow grip and the two wheel-protectors.

20 The Pāñcāla prince
ignored the repeated slicing of his bows
and applied his weapons-lore
against the tawny-horse warrior Droṇa.

21 Seeing Satyajit
growing in glorious prowess
Droṇa sliced off that mahātmā's head
with a crescent arrow.

22 Afraid of Droṇa
Yudhiṣṭhira fled on his swift horses
as soon as the mahā-chariot-hero
prince of the Pāñcālas fell.

23 The Pāñcālas, Kekayas, Matsyas, Cedis, Karuṣas,
and Kosalas
rushed at Droṇa in a bid to save Yudhiṣṭhira.

24 The foe-crushing ācārya
intent on capturing Yudhiṣṭhira
swept through these warriors
like fire through bales of cotton.

25 Seeing Droṇa holding sway
Virāṭa's younger brother Śatānīka
charged headlong at the ācārya.

26 Shouting his war-cries
Śatānīka fired six polished sun-bright arrows
wounding Droṇa and his charioteer and horses.

27 With deliberate cruelty
he showered arrows on the mahā-chariot-hero
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa.

28 With a razor-sharp shaft
Droṇa decapitated the ear-ringed roaring
Śatānīka and instantly the Matsya soldiers fled.

29 First the Matsyas, then Cedis, Karuṣas, Kekayas,
Pāñcālas, Sṛṃjayas and Pāṇḍavas were routed
by Droṇa

30 Seeing golden-charioted Droṇa
infuriatedly and valiantly sweeping through
their ranks like fire through a forest
the Sṛñjayas trembled.

31 When Droṇa pulled taut
his bow in order to smite his enemies
the twang reveberated in all directions.

32 His nimbly shot arrows
sliced through elephants and horses and soldiers
and chariot-heroes and elephant-warriors.

33 Droṇa's arrow-deluge
like torrents of rain cascading
from wind-whipped clouds when winter ends
spread panic among his enemies.

34 Droṇa
powerful hero
mahā-archer
saviour of his friends
seemed to be everywhere
as he harassed his enemies.

35 Droṇa's dazzling golden bow
was visible in all parts of the field
like lightning illuminating cloud-masses.

36 As he sped O Bharata
the altar-design on his war-flag
appeared to us to be a Himālayan peak.

37 The slaughter caused
by Droṇa among the ranks
equalled the slaughter of the Daityas
by god-and-anti-god-*namaskāraed* Viṣṇu.

38 Heroic truth-speaking wise strong fame-deserving
Liberal-minded Droṇa created a river of blood
A fearful river spreading terror among cowards . . .

39 Coats of arrow
its billows
Waving flags
its whirlpools
Dying humans
its eroding banks
Elephants and horses
its crocodiles
Swords
its fishes
A river
almost impassable

40 Bones of soldiers
its pebbles
A river
horrendous to see
Drums and cymbals
its tortoises
Shields and bucklers
its boats
Soldiers' hair
its weeds and moss

41 Arrows
its ripples
Bows
its waves
Soldiers' arms
its snakes
An impetuous river
sweeping away
In its fierce currents
Kauravas and Sṛñjayas

42 Human heads
its stones
*Śakti*-missiles
its fishes
Maces
its rafts
Head-gears
its bubbles
Ripped-out entrails
its gruesome reptiles

43 A river carrying heroes
to the other world
Their flesh and blood
its mire
Elephants
its crocodiles
Flagstaffs
its trees
A river sucking in
Kṣatriyas

44 An ugly river
clogged with corpses
Foot-soldiers
its sharks
A Droṇa-created river
impossible to cross
But flowing
to the land of death

45 A river swarming
with flesh-eating creatures
Infested with packs
of dogs and jackals
Haunted by mahā-horrendous
*piśāca* flesh-eaters
That surrounded it
on all sides

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46 Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
and the hosts of Pāṇḍava warriors
rushed upon the mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa
who like Antaka-Death was devouring his enemies.

47 Those splendid heroes
together formed a ring around Droṇa
like sun-rays ringing the flaming sun.

48 In defence of Droṇa
your warriors and rājās and princes
raised high their weapons
and tightened the circle around the mahā-bowman.

49 Śikhaṇḍin wounded Droṇa
with five knotted arrows.
Kṣatravarman with twenty arrows
Vasudāna with five

50 Uttamaujas with three
Kṣatradeva with seven
Sātyaki with a hundred
Yudhāmanyu with eight

51 Yudhiṣṭhira with twelve –
all succeeded in wounding Droṇa.
Dhṛṣṭadyumna fired twelve
and Cekitāna three arrows.

52 Never-failing Droṇa
smashed through the Pāṇḍavas' chariots
with the ferocity of a musth elephant
and killed Dṛḍhasena.

53 Approaching rājā Kṣema
as he battled valiantly
Droṇa hurled him fatally out of his chariot
with nine arrows.

54 He protected others
and needed none to protect him
as he ripped through the enemy ranks.

55 He wounded Śikhaṇḍin
with twelve arrows
Uttamaujas with twelve.
he sent Vasudāna to Yama's realm.

56 He wounded Kṣatravarman
with eighty arrows
Sudakṣiṇa with twentysix.
He felled Kṣatradeva in his chariot-seat
with *bhalla*-arrows.

57 After wounding Yudhāmanyu
with sixtyfour arrows
and Sātyaki with thirty
golden-charioted Droṇa furiously attacked
Yudhiṣṭhira.

58 Finest-of-rājās Yudhiṣṭhira
panicked and fled from the guru on swift horses.
Then a Pāñcāla prince attacked Droṇa.

59 Droṇa aimed first
at his horses and charioter and bow
and then killed him.
He crashed like a meteor thudding on earth.

60 With the death
of that prince of the Pāñcālas
mahā-shouts broke out on all sides
"Kill Droṇa! Kill Droṇa!"

61 Powrful Droṇa
continued his ceaseless harassment
of the incensed Pāñcālas and Matsyas
the Kekayas and Sṛñjayas and Pāṇḍavas.

62 Sātyaki, Cekitāna, Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Śikhaṇḍin,
Vṛddhakṣema's son, Citrasena, Senabindu,
Suvarca –

63 These and other warriors of different countries
Were decimated by Droṇa with the help of the
Kauravas.

64 Mahārāja
your victorious warriors in that mahā-massacre
began a fearful slaughter of the fleeing Pāṇḍavas.

65 They shook with fear O Bharata –
the Pāñcālas and Matsyas and Kekayas
under the onslaught of mahātmā Droṇa
as the Dānavas trembled when Indra attacked.

## SECTION TWENTY-TWO



1 "After Droṇa decimated the Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas
in the mahā-battle,
who had courage left to challenge him?"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

2 "Which bull-brave Kṣatriyas still had the valour,
the valour that baffles cowards,
the valour that marks
the remarkable man?

3 That indeed is valour which recovers
after defeat.
Aho! Was there not one with courage
to face Droṇa?

4 Like a yawning tiger,
like a rut-streaming elephant,
like an armour-clad warrior
ready to lay down his life,

5 That brilliant mahā-bowman,
that tiger-among-men,
that confounder-of-enemies,
grateful and firm-in-truth,
always eager to work for the good
of Duryodhana,

6 Bharadvāja's valiant son Droṇa himself –
seeing him,
which warriors fought back? –
This is my question, Sañjaya."

7 Seeing them panic after Droṇa's attacks (said Sañjaya)–
The Pāñcālas, Pāṇḍavas, Matsyas, Sṛñjayas, Cedis,
Kekayas –

8 Seeing them run from the ceaseless arrows of Droṇa,
Like small boats tossing on the waves of an ocean,

9 The Kauravas burst into loud cries of victory
and sounded many musical instruments
as they mopped up the elephants,
horses, and soldiers.

10 Rājā Duryodhana
stood in the centre of his army
and smiling at his success
said to Karṇa:

11 "Son of Rādhā, look!
The Pāñcālas scatter from Droṇa's arrows
like frightened deer from a lion.

12 It seems to me
they will never want to fight again
for Droṇa has felled them
like huge trees toppled by a tempest.

13 The gold-winged arrows
of mahātmā Droṇa have confounded them:
they are running round in circles.

14 The assaults of mahātmā Droṇa
followed up by the Kaurava sorties
force them to huddle together
like elephants trapped in a forest fire.

15 Like swarms of bees
the stinging arrows of Droṇa harass them
as they scuttle away in quaking groups.

16 I am overjoyed, Karṇa:
Mahā-furious Bhīma abandoned by Pāṇḍavas
and Sṛnjayas and left to the mercy of my warriors!

17 There is no doubt
that ill-minded fool today sees Droṇa everywhere!
His life and his kingdom are ruined!"

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18 Karṇa replied:
"Mahā-muscled Bhīma will never lay down arms,
O tiger-among-men, so long as there is life in him.
He will not tolerate others' victory-cries.

19 If you ask me
the brave and powerful Pāṇḍavas
who are expert in the use of all weapons
can never be defeated.

20 They will recall
your attempts to poison them and burn them
your defeating them in the dice-game
and their painful exile in the forest
and they will never give up fighting.

21 Mahā-muscled wolf-waisted Vṛkodara Bhīma
has already swerved to attack us
and will take his pick of our chariot-heroes.

22 With his many weapons
his sword and bow and śakti-missiles
his iron mace and elephants and horses
his chariots and his soldiers
he will kill countless Kauravas.

23 Sātyaki's chariot-heroes
and the Pāñcālas and Kekayas
the Matsyas and specially the Pāṇḍavas
are supporting him.

24 Infuriated Bhīma
again and again urges to battle
those brave and powerful mahā-chariot-heroes.

25 Those bull-brave Kaurava warriors –
Vṛkodara Bhīma's followers surround Droṇa
like clouds encircling the sun.

26 On the side
of the Pāṇḍavas is their friend Krishna
who offers them invaluable military counsel
who is modest and auspicious-marked
and expert in the art of destroying enemies.

27 He has already O rājā
subdued many rulers on the battlefield.
With Nārāyaṇa-Krishna as their ally
how can you hope to crush the Pāṇḍavas?

28 United in aim
they will rush at unprotected strict-vowed Droṇa
like doomed moths flying into a flame.

29 Experts in warfare
they are well-equipped to attack Droṇa.
It will be a difficult time for Bharadvāja's son.

30 Without wasting time
let us rush to the side of Droṇa
before the Pāṇḍavas butcher him
like a pack of wolves a mahā-elephant."

31 Rājā Duryodhana (continued Sañjaya)
listened to the advice of Rādheya-Karṇa
O rājā and hurried with his brothers to Droṇa.

32 In the meantime
the Pāṇḍava heroes had re-grouped
and galloped ahead on splendid horses
eager to cut down unprotected Droṇa.

## SECTION TWENTY-THREE

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:
"Sañjaya, give me all the details
of the inflamed heroes
who attacked Droṇa under Bhīma's orders."

2 Sañjaya replied:
Seeing wolf-waisted Bhīma advancing
in a chariot pulled by dappled horses
Sātyaki also urged his silver horses forward.

3 Inspired with anger
never-defeated Yudhāmanyu sped towards Droṇa
in a chariot pulled by multi-coloured horses.

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4 The Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna
advanced in a chariot whose swift horses
were gold-caparisoned and pigeon-coloured.

5 Reinforcing his father Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and aiming at a total victory
strict-vowed Kṣatradharman advanced on red horses.

6 Śikhaṇḍin's son Kṣatradeva
spurred his magnificently-decorated horses
with milk-white eyes and lotus-leaf skins.

7 Nakula marched
on beautiful Kāmboja horses
with skins as glossy as parrot feathers.

8 Uttamaujas advanced O Bharata
against Droṇa standing with strung bow
on snorting cloud-complexioned horses.

9 Sahadeva rode to battle
brandishing his weapons
on *tittira*-coloured wind-swift horses.

10 Tiger-among-men rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
advanced on horses white as elephants' tusks
with black tails and wind-swift speed.

11 Behind Yudhiṣṭhira
came countless wariors on wind-swift horses
with golden caparisons.

12 After rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
came the Pāñcāla king Drupada
with a golden umbrella protecting his head
and valiant warriors protecting his person.

13 Drupada's horses
were *lalāma* with white-streaked foreheads
and *hari* with long manes and golden bodies
capable of enduring any battle noises.
From mid-field
mahā-archer rājā Drupada fearlessly faced his enemy.

14 Then came Virāṭa
reinforcing Drupada with mahā-chariot-heroes.
Śikhaṇḍin and Dhṛṣṭaketu and the Kekaya princes

15 With their followers
came behind the Matsya-rājā Virāṭa.
Horses with skins as lovely as trumpet-flowers

16 Provided radiance
to the chariot of the Matsya-rājā.
Swift turmeric-coloured horses with golden chains

17 Pulled the chariot
of the son of the Matsya-rājā.
The five Kekaya brothers rode horses
with skins red as *indragopa*-insects.

18 Those five brothers
had golden war-flags and golden complexions
and sported golden garlands

19 Along with golden armour
and fired arrows like clouds showering rain.
The incalculably strong Pāñcāla prince Śikhaṇḍin

20 Came on horses
that were gifted by Tumburu
and had skins the colour of unfired clay pots.
Of the twelve thousand Pāñcāla mahā-chariot-heroes

21 Six thousand O gracious monarch
comprised the chariot division of Śikhaṇḍin.
The lion-among-men son of Śiśupāla

22 Came on horses
that seemed to leap as gaily as antelopes.
The immensely powerful Cedi-ruler Dhṛṣṭaketu

23 Never-defeated in battle
rode multi-coloured Kāmboja steeds.
The Kekaya prince Bṛhatkṣatra

24 Rode Sindhu horses
clean-limbed and straw-smoke-coloured.
Jasmine-eyed and lotus-golden Bāhlīka horses

25 Were the vehicles
of Śikhaṇḍin's valiant son Ṛkṣadeva.
Gold-caparisoned and silk-skinned horses

26 Of great endurance
carried foe-crushing Senabindu to battle.
*Krauñca*-coloured horses carried the young

27 But mahā-chariot-hero son
of the king of Kāśi to battle. O rājā!
Mind-swift and black-necked white horses
obedient to all commands of their charioteer
carried prince Prativindhya to the battlefield.

28 Pārtha-Bhīma's son Sutasoma
as handsome and graceful as Soma the moon
rode horses with skins like white-and-yellow
māṣa-flowers.

29 He had the splendour
of a thousand moons.
He was born in Udayendu,
the Kaurava city.
He was born on the day
when the sacred juice
of the soma was extracted –
so he came to be known
by the name of Sutasoma.

30 Nakula's son Śatānīka
rode horses as lustrous as the rising sun
and as pink as the flowers of the *śāla*.

31 Sahadeva's son tiger-among-men Śrutakarman
rode horses that were gold-caparisoned
and blue-skinned like a peacock's neck.

32 Pārtha-Arjuna's son Śrutakīrti
who equalled the learning of his father
rode blue horses the colour of kingfishers.

33 Prince Abhimanyu
one and a half times more brilliant in battle
than Krishna and Arjuna
rode tawny-skinned horses to the field.

34 Your son Yuyutsu
the only one of your sons to join the Pāṇḍavas
rode a massive-bodied horse to battle.

35 Vṛddhakṣema's valiant son Suśarmā
galloped to the battlefied
on stout and excellent paddy-skinned steeds.

36 Sucitta's son Satyadhṛti
rode black-legged horses with golden breast-
plates and trained into absolute obedience.

37 Śreṇimat advanced
on gold-garlanded and gold-armoured horses
with skins the sheen of silk.

38 Magnificent horses
gold-skinned and garlanded in gold
carried the raja of Kāśī to battle.

39 Veda-wise Satyadhṛti
expert in all weapons but specially the bow
advanced on dawn-pink horses.

40 The Pāñcāla leader Dhṛṣṭadyumna
determined to be the doom of Droṇa
advanced on pigeon-white steeds.

41 Reinforcing him
were Sucitta's valiant son Satyadhṛti
and Śreṇimat and the king of Kāśī
and the king of Kāśī's son Abhibhū.

42 Like Yama or Vaiśravaṇa-Kubera
they came on gold-garlanded Kāmboja steeds
spreading terror in the enemy ranks.

43 Six thousand Prabhadrakas
of Kāmboja came on multi-coloured horses
with golden flagstaffs on their chariots

44 Bows pulled taut
to shower arrowy confusion among their enemies
and bound by a vow to do or die
in their mission to help Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

45 Cekitāna advanced
on confident gold-garlanded horses
with skins like yellow-gold silk.

46 Savyasācī-Arjuna's maternal uncle Kuntibhoja
advanced on horses of the finest breed
with skins as brilliant as a rainbow.

47 Rājā Rocamāna
came to the battlefield on begemmed horses
that scintillated like stars in the sky.

48 Jayadratha's son Sahadeva
advanced to the battlefield
on black-legged horses decorated in gold filigree.

49 Sudāman advanced
on vulture-swift horses
with skins as white as a lotus stalk.

50 Gopati's son Siṁhasena
the Pāñcāla prince who was killed earlier
led horses pink as rabbits
with white streaks running down their lengths.

51 That tiger-among-men
known among the Pāñcālas as Janamejaya
advanced on horses pale as mustard flowers.

52 The Pāñcāla prince
advanced on gold-garlanded horses
with backs as white as curd
with moon-lovely faces
and skins the colour of *māṣa*-flowers.

53 Daṇḍadhāra advanced
on brave and docile horses
as supple as reed-stalks
and glossy-skinned like a lotus.

54 Vyāghradatta advanced
 on horses the colour of asses' skins
 and backs the colour of grey mice
 frisking playfully as they marched.

55 Sudhanvat of the Pāñcālas
 advanced on dark-headed horses
 caparisoned exquisitely and gold-garlanded.

56 Citrāyudha advanced
 on horses swift as Indra's thunderbolt
 and red-skinned like an *indragopa*-insect.

57 The Kosala king's son Sukṣatra
 rode horses that sported gold garlands
 and were as white as *cakravāka*-birds.

58 Satyadhṛti advanced
 on horses wearing chains of Jāmbu-gold
 and trotting with great confidence.

59 Śukla advanced
 to the battlefield with flagstaffs
 and arrows and bows and horses
 all of one colour: white.

60 Samudrasena's son
 the immeasurably powerful Candrasena
 arrived on moon-white ocean-bred horses.

61 Splendidly-charioted Śaibya
 advanced on gold-ornamented horses
 wearing golden garlands
 with skins the colour of the blue lotus.

62 Irrepressible Rathasena
 advanced on red-and-white striped horses
 with skins the colour of the *kalāya*-flower.

63 The heroic king
 celebrated as the greatest of warriors
 who had humbled the Paṭṭacara-miscreants
 advanced on blue-parrot horses.

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64 Citrāyudha
in beautiful armour and flagstaff and weapons
and wearing lovely garlands
rode horses as red as flames-of-the-forest.

65 Nila advanced
to the battlefield with horses
and flagstaff and armour and bow
all of one colour: blue.

66 Citra advanced
on splendid horses with splendid flagstaffs
and bows and chariot-guards glittering with gems.

67 Rocamāna's son Hemavarṇa
advanced on horses with skins that shone
like the leaf of the lotus-flower.

68 Daṇḍaketu advanced
on docile speckled horses with curved backs
and white testicles
with skins the colour of hen's eggs.

69 After his father's death
at Keśava-Krishna's hands the Pāṇḍya ruler
fled with all his friends and relatives –

70 And obtained weapons
from Bhīṣma and Droṇa and Kṛpa and Balarāma
and became the equal in arms-skill
of Rukmin and Karṇa and Arjuna and Krishna –

71 After which
he sought the destruction of Dvārakā
and even wanted to conquer the whole world
until dissuaded by wise friends wishing his
welfare –

72 So that he finally
abandoned thoughts of revenge
and devoted himself to his kingdom's good –
that Pāṇḍya ruler with his ocean-emblem
rode on moon-white horses.

73 Decorated with *lapis lazuli*
and twanging his divine bowstring
he rushed straight at Droṇa.

74 The chariot-heroes
who followed Pāṇḍya totalled
one hundred and forty thousand
and rode *ātarūṣa*-flower-hued horses.

75 Chariot-wheel-emblemed
Ghaṭotkaca advanced on horses
of different colours and stature and appearance.

76 Ignoring the advice
of the gathered Bharata soldiers
the hero whose bhakti had made him
take the side of Yudhiṣṭhira –

77 Strong-armed and pink-eyed Bṛhanta
rode his splendid chariot
pulled by giant and powerful steeds.

78 Gold-skinned horses
made up the rear of dharma-knowing Yudhiṣṭhira
as that finest of rājās marched to battle.

79 The god-like Prabhadrakas
advanced to the battlefield on excellent horses
of the loveliest and subtlest celestial colours.

80 O Indra-among-rājās!
All the brave golden-flagged followers of Bhīma
looked like gods led by Indra.

81 They added lustre
to the Pāṇḍava forces under Dhṛṣṭadyumna
but Bhāradvāja-Droṇa's radiance excelled all
others'.

82 Mahārāja
Droṇa's war-flag of black deerskin
decorated with the emblem of the water-pot
shone with golden splendour.

83 So did Bhīma's
on which I saw the figure of a silver lion
with two glittering *lapis lazuli* eyes.

84 I was impressed by the war-flag
of mahā-energetic Kuru-rājā Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira
with its golden staff and moon-ringed planets

85 With two *mṛdaṅga*-drums
called Nanda and Upananda attached to it
producing enchanting sounds
when mechanically operated.

86 Nakula's mahā-war-flag
was designed with a gold-backed *śarabha*-beast
calculated to terrify his enemies.

87 Sahadeva's war-flag
had a *haṁsa*-swan in silver-work
surrounded with little bells and pennants
calculated to bring grief to his enemies.

88 Draupadī's five sons
carried on their war-flags the figures
of Dharma, Maruta, Śakra-Indra,
and the mahātmā Aśvins.

89 On young Abhimanyu's chariot O rājā
fluttered a war-flag with a golden *śārṅga*-peacock
which dazzled like molten gold.

90 O Indra-among-rājās!
The war-flag of Ghaṭotkaca sported a vulture.
His horses like Rāvaṇa's could roam at will.

91 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
had the celestial Māhendra-bow
and Bhīma had the Vāyavya-weapon.

92 The indestructible bow of Brahmā
for the preservation of the three worlds
was in the hands of Phālguna-Arjuna.

93 The Vaiṣṇava-bow
was in the hands of Nakula
and Sahadeva had the Aśvin-bow.

94 Draupadī's five sons O Bharata
had the five unique celestial bows:
Raudra, Āgneya, Kaubera, Yāmya, Giriśa.

95 Rohiṇī's son Balarāma himself
gladly handed the Rudra-Śiva-bow obtained
by him to Subhadrā's mahatma son Abhimanyu.

96 Such were the golden war-flags
that fluttered on the battlefield
predicting the grief of enemies.

97 Mahārāja
the army of Droṇa had countless war-flags
fluttering on the battlefield
like an intricate picturesque painting.

98 As they attacked Droṇa O rājā
we heard the names and lineage of the warriors
announced exactly as at a *svayamvara* ceremony.

## SECTION TWENTY-FOUR

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said to Sañjaya:
The kings who re-grouped and attacked
under the leadership of wolf-waisted Bhīma
were strong enough to rout even the gods.

2 It's fate that decides.
Man does what he can
but it is destiny propelling him
and destiny deciding the consequences.

3 Imagine Yudhiṣṭhira
exiled for so long in the forest
matted-haired and wearing black deerskin
moving about in disguise –

4 That same Yudhiṣṭhira
now commands this massive army!
Destiny has disaster in store for my son!

5 There is no doubt
that man is controlled by destiny
which makes him do even what he does not
wish to do.

6 Addicted to gambling
Yudhiṣṭhira suffered.
Now destiny brings back his allies.

7 "The Kekayas
are on my side – and the Kāśīs
and Kosalas and Cedis and Baṅgas

8 The whole earth
is on my side not Pārtha-Arjuna's!" –
*Tāta!* Dear Sañjaya!
This is what foolish Duryodhana told me once.

9 What is it but fate
when Droṇa so well protected by my soldiers
gets killed by Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna?

10 How else could death
single out powerful war-eager arms-skilled Droṇa
surrounded by all those rājās?

11 I am desolated.
I feet faint. How can I live
with both Bhīṣma and Droṇa dead?

12 What Kṣattā-Vidura warned
when he saw me pampering Duryodhana –
O *tatā*! Dear one! All that has come true.

13 To abandon Duryodhana
in order to save my other sons –
that would be heartless –
but at least they would survive.

14 The man who abandons dharma for selfish reasons
debases himself
and gets the worst of everything.

15 Sañjaya
the hope of this kingdom is dead
and I can see nothing is left.

16 The two bull-brave heroes
are dead.
The props of our kingdom are gone.
What else is left?

17 Tell me then
in detail what happened on the field:
who attacked and who fled in fear?

18 Tell me specially
what the bull-brave chariot-hero Dhanañjaya-
Arjuna did
for we fear him and his brother Vṛkodara-Bhīma.

19 Sañjaya
let me know what horror happened
when the re-grouped Pāṇḍavas attacked.

20 *Tāta!* Dear one! How did you react
to the counter-attack of the Pāṇḍavas?
Which of our heroes bore the brunt of the attack?

## SECTION TWENTY-FIVE

1 Sañjaya reported:
With the return of the Pāṇḍava forces
a fearful rain of arrows fell on us
as thick as clouds obscuring the sun.

2 Your huge army
was hidden in swirls of kicked-up dust
and for a moment
we thought that Droṇa had been killed.

3 Seeing the Pāṇḍavas
determined to cruelly kill Droṇa
Duryodhana said to his soldiers:

4 "Lords of men!
Seize every opportunity you get
to neutralise the Pāṇḍavas
with all your śakti and passion and skill."

5 Seeing Bhīma approaching
your son Durmarṣaṇa attacked furiously
with a torrent of arrows
in an attempt to provide cover for Droṇa.

[VII:25:6-15]

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6 Like Death personified
he attacked Bhīma with his arrows
and Bhīma retaliated.
A mahā-gory duel followed.

7 Indifferent to death
and without caring for kingdom or success
the skilful heroes followed their leaders' orders
and faced their adversaries.

8 O lord of the world! Kṛtavarman succeeded
in blocking the advance of heroic Sātyaki
as he rushed to attack Droṇa.

9 Śini's grandson Sātyaki retaliated
with a fierce shower of arrows
and so did Kṛtavarman.

10 The Sindhu-ruler Jayadratha
succeeded in containing the maha-bowman
Kṣatravarman
with a shower of sharp arrows.

11 But Kṣatravarman
sliced the bow and war-flag of Jayadratha
and wounded him with ten *nārāca*-arrows.

12 The Sindhu ruler
deftly lifted and fitted another bow
and wounded Kṣatravarman with iron arrows.

13 Subāhu succeeded
in preventing his mahā-chariot-hero brother
Yuyutsu
who had sided with the Pāṇḍavas
from advancing towards Droṇa.

14 But Yuyutsu
with two polished razor-sharp arrows
sliced off the mace-like arms of Subāhu
that were wielding the bow and arrows.

15 Dharmātmā Yudhiṣṭhira
the finest of the Pāṇḍavas
was blocked by the Madra-rājā Śalya
like the shore blocking a stormy ocean.

16 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
fired life-sapping arrows at Śalya
who wounded Yudhiṣṭhira with sixtyfour shafts
and burst into a loud war-cry.

17 Yudhiṣṭhira replied
with two razor-arrows that sliced
the bow and war-flag of Śalya.
The soldiers shouted applause.

18 Rājā Bāhlīka
with a huge force of soldiers
blocked with arrows the advance of Drupada.

19 The two elderly combatants
backed by their massive armies
clashed like two rutting leader-elephants.

20 Vinda and Anuvinda
of Avanti attacked the Matsya-ruler Virāṭa
the way Indra and Agni had attacked Bali.

21 The Matsyas and Kekayas
were locked in a tumultuous clash
involving soldiers and elephants and horses
and resembling the god-and-antigod war.

22 Bhūtakarman succeeded
in blocking Nakula's son Śatānīka
as he advanced firing arows at Droṇa.

23 Nakula's son
forthwith fired three broad-head *bhalla*-arrows
that sliced Bhūtakarman's arms
and then decapitated him.

24 Viviṁśati blocked
the illustrious hero Sutasoma as he advanced
towards Droṇa under cover of a barrage of
arrows.

25 Infuriated Sutasoma
wounded his uncle Viviṁśati with straight arrows
and clad in armour stood alone in the field.

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26 With six sharp iron arrows
that sped straight to their targets
Bhīmaratha sent Śālva and his charioteer
to Yama's realm.

27 Mahārāja
as Śrutakarman charged on peacock-coloured
horses he was blocked by Citrasena's son.

28 These two grandsons of yours
possessed prowess of remarkable calibre
and fought with grim determination
to achieve the desires of their *pitṛ*-ancestors.

29 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
adding lustre to the glory of his father
blocked Prativindhya with an arrow-shower.

31 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman O bull-brave monarch
scattered arrows at Draupadī's son Prativindhya
like a sower flinging seeds.

32 Duḥśāsana's son blocked
the advance towards Droṇa
of the mahā-chariot-hero
son of Arjuna and Draupadī
Śrutakīrti.

33 Draupadī's son
the equal of Krishna
with three broad-headed *bhalla*-arrows
mutilated the bow and war-flag and charioteer
of Duḥśāsana's son.

34 O rājā
Duryodhana's son Lakṣmaṇa blocked
the leader of the Paṭṭacara-renegades
who was considered the finest warrior of both
armies.

35 The Paṭṭacara leader
in a colourful display of bow-prowess
shredded Lakṣmaṇa's bow and war-flag.

36 Young and intelligent Vikarṇa
chose to oppose on the battlefield
the youthful Śikhaṇḍin.

37 Yājñaseni-Śikhaṇḍin's arrow-net
fell on your mahā-wise son Vikarṇa
and he stood there glittering with arrows.

38 A deluge of arrows
from Aṅgada blocked Uttamaujas
as he advanced towards Droṇa.

39 These two lions-among-men
grappled with each other in a combat
that increased the delight of the soldiers
as well as their own delight.

40 The brilliant bowman Durmukha
fired calf-tooth *vatsadanta*-arrows that checked
the advance of Purujit against Droṇa.

41 Purujit fired
a *nārāca*-arrow between Durmukha's eyebrows.
A lovely sight!
A lotus-face on a long stem!

42 As the Kekaya princes
rushed in a body waving red war-flags
Karṇa blocked them with an arrow-shower.

43 Though wounded
they retaliated with a counter-shower
but Karṇa kept up a ceaseless barrage.

44 Such a barrage
that neither they nor Karṇa were visible
nor their horses and charioteers and chariots
and flags.

45 Your three sons
Durajaya and Jaya and Vijaya
battled with Nīla and the Kāśī-ruler and Jayatsena.

46 The battle they fought
was like a clash between a tiger and a lion and
a wolf on one side
and a bear and a buffalo and a bull on the other.
It astounded and delighted the spectators.

47 The two brothers
Kṣemadhūrti and Bṛhanta attacked Sātyaki
with sharp arrows as he rushed at Droṇa.

48 It was incredible –
that clash between Sātyaki and the brothers
resembling a clash between a lion and a rutting elephant.

49 The rājā of Cedi's arrows
angrily prevented rājā Ambaṣṭha
from approaching anywhere near Droṇa.

50 Ambaṣṭha fired
a long bone-piercing arrow at Cedi
whose bow slipped from his hand
as he toppled headlong from his chariot.

51 Śaradvat's son Kṛpa
with his *kṣudraka*-arrows prevented angry Vārdhakṣemi
from approaching Droṇa.

52 Kṛpa and Vārdhakṣemi
were locked in a malevolent single-minded duel
that made them oblivious to all else.

53 Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas
always eager to add to Droṇa's fame
battled with rājā Maṇimat.

54 With amazing dexterity
Maṇimat killed Bhūriśravas' charioteer
and shattered his bow and flagstaff and umbrella.

55 Foe-crushing Bhūriśravas
whose flag-emblem was a sacrificial stake
leapt out of his chariot
and slaughtered Maṇimat and his horses and charioteer.

56 Remounting his chariot O rājā
and fitting another bow and himself driving
Bhūriśravas recommenced his destruction of the Pāṇḍavas

57 Vṛṣasena's arrows blocked
the swift advance the Pāṇḍya-ruler
who rushed like Indra after the anti-gods.

58 Maces, bludgeons, swords, stones, *bhuśuṇḍis*,
axes, spears, and many other weapons

59 Including clubs, mallets, *cakras*, *bhindipālas*,
battle-axes, dirt and dust and fire and water
and ash and pebbles and straw and trees

60 Formed the armoury of Ghaṭotkaca
who attacked Droṇa in every possible way:
smiting, splintering, smashing, flinging, clutching.

61 The rākṣasa Alambuṣa
tried to block the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca
by firing a variety of wonderful weapons.

62 The two rākṣasas clashed
with the ferocity of the long-past battle
between Indra and the anti-god Śambara.

63 Bharadvāja's son Droṇa
saw the Pāṇḍava mahā-chariot-hero
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
advancing towards him relentlessly

64 And harassing his opponents O mahārāja
with a deluge of well-aimed arrows –
and he marched forward to stop him.

65 O rājā
the other earth-lords also clashed –
so many they cannot all be named.

66 Horses fought horses
elephants battled elephants
Soldiers combated soldiers
and chariot-heroes attacked chariot-heroes.

67 In that gory battle of bull-brave heroes
the honour-conscious soldiers of different
families
fought to retain their family pride.

68 Mahārāja!
May all go well with you!
Hundreds of duels were fought
between chariot-heroes and elephant-warriors
between horse-soldiers and foot-soldiers.

69 Never such a battle!
Never heard of nor seen!
As that one between the Droṇa-attackers
and the Droṇa-protectors.

70 Innumerable combats *prabhu*-lord
on the battlefield on that day!
Whoever witnessed them exclaimed:
"Horrendous! Unimaginable! Fearful!"

## SECTION TWENTY-SIX

1 "With the re-grouping of the Pāṇḍavas,"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"and the zeal of my soldiers,
how did the battle proceed?

2 How did Arjuna deal with the dor-or-die
*saṁśaptaka*-squad, Sañjaya,
and how did the *saṁśaptakas*
deal with Pārtha-Arjuna?"

3 Sañjaya replied:
With the re-grouping of the Pāṇḍavas
and the zeal of your soldiers,
your son led an elephant-charge against Bhīma.

4 Challenged by rājā Duryodhana
Bhīma met the charge head-on
like one elephant confronting another
or a bull facing another bull.

5 Brave-in-battle Bhīma
with a tremendous display of strength
frustrated the attack of Duryodhana
O favour-bestowing monarch.

6 Hill-huge elephants
with rutting juice streaming from their temples
were forced to retreat under onslaught
of Bhīma's *nārāca*-arrows.

7 Like a fierce wind
reducing to tatters a network of clouds
the son of the wind-god Pavanātmaja-Bhīma
dispersed the horde of elephants.

8 As he stood there
shooting arrows at the attacking elephants
Bhīma dazzled like the sun
shooting its rays on the earth's teeming life.

9 The blood-splashed elephants
looked as lovely as cloud-clusters in the sky
glowing with the rays of the sun.

10 Infuriated Duryodhana
slipped in and wounded Bhīma with polished arrows
while the wind-god's son was attacking the elephants.

11 His eyes burning blood-red
Bhīma shot winged arrows at Duryodhana
with the intention of slaughtering him.

12 Punctured with arrows
Duryodhana laughed and angrily wounded
Bhīma with sun-bright *nārāca*-shafts.

13 With two *bhalla*-arrows
fired in quick succession Pāṇḍava Bhīma shredded
the gem-embroidered elephant-design
on Duryodhana's war-flag as well as his bow.

14 Seeing Bhīma harassing Duryodhana
the king of Aṅga advanced on an elephant
with the intention of attacking Bhīma
O honour-bestowing monarch.

15 As that excellent elephant
lumbered towards him like a thunder-cloud
Bhīma fired a *nārāca* between its temples.

16 The *nārāca*-shafts
sliced through the breast and stuck in the ground
and the elephant toppled
like a hill split by lightning.

17 The Mleccha Aṅga-ruler
fell along with the elephant
but wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma
decapitated him even before he fell.

18 With Aṅga's death
his division panicked
and chariots and horses and elephants
trampled foot-soldiers as they fled.

19 After the decimation
of the army of the Aṅga-ruler
Bhagadatta of Prāgjyotiṣa charged Bhīma
on an elephant

20 That traced its descent
direct from the elephant Airāvata of Maghavat-Indra
when Indra routed the Daityas and Dānavas.

21 Bending its forelegs
and curling its trunk
that elephant lumbered fiercely at Bhīma.

22 Rolling its eyes
as if to grind Bhīma to pulp
that elephant trampled and crushed the chariot
and the horses of Pāṇḍava-Bhīma.

23 Bhīma sprinted
and hid himself under the beast's body
for he knew the tactic called *añjalikavedha*
dealing with the under-bodies of elephants.

24 He kept pummelling
from beneath with bare fists the elephant
that had charged with intent to kill him.

25 The bewildered beast
spun like a potter's wheel
though it was as strong as ten thousand elephants
and though its obsession was to kill Bhīma.

26 Bhīma slipped out
from beneath the belly and faced the beast
which swung its trunk and raised its leg
as if to crush Bhīma.

27 It tried to coil
its trunk round Bhīma's neck
but Bhīmasena nimbly stepped out of reach.

28 Once again
Bhīma slipped beneath the elephant's body
and noticed an elephant of his army
charging for combat.

29 With amazing swiftness
he rushed out and sped to safety
while all around a loud wail arose.

30 "Aho! Bhīma is dead!
Bhīma has been killed by the elephant!"
O honour-bestowing monarch!
The Pāṇḍava army scattered in panic

31 From the spot
where wolf-waisted Bhīma had been standing.
Presuming Bhīma had been killed,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira

32 With Pāñcāla support
quickly surrounded Bhagadatta with chariots.
Foe-smiting finest-of-chariot-heroes Yudhiṣṭhira

33 Harassed Bhagadatta
with hundreds of thousands of sharp arrows.
Deflecting the arrows with his *aṅkuśa*-hook,

34 The mountain-chief Bhagadatta
marched his elephant against the Pāṇḍava and
Pāñcāla.
We witnessed a marvellous feat of Bhagadatta's!

35 He performed it O lord of the world
with the help of his elephant.
The Daśārṇa-rājā attacked Bhagadatta

36 From an elephant
renowned for its flexible manoeuvring.
The clash between those giant elephants

37 Resembled the battle
in the past between tree-covered winged hills.
The elephant of Bhagadatta with deft movements

38 Killed the Daśārṇa elephant
by goring apart its flanks.
Firing seven sun-bright *tomāra*-missiles

39 Bhagadatta killed
the Daśārṇa ruler whose howdah had become loose.
Yudhiṣṭhira wounded rājā Bhagadatta

40 And surrounded him
with a strong force of chariot-heroes.
Riding his elephants with chariot-heroes around him,

41 Bhagadatta dazzled
like a forest-flowering hill on fire.
Surrounded by that maṇḍala of chariot-heroes

42 He kept firing
volley on volley of arrows at his foes.
The Prāgjyotiṣa rājā goaded his mahā-elephant

43 And advanced menacingly
in the direction of Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki's chariot.
Śini's grandson Sātyaki leapt to safety in the nick of time

44 Just as the huge beast
twined its trunk around his chariot and twisted it.
His charioteer controlled the Sindhu horses

45 And succeeded
in halting it where Sātyaki was standing.
The elephant slipped through an opening in the maṇḍala

46 Of chariots
and scattered the numerous earth-lords.
Frightened by the beast those bull-brave warriors

47 Got the impression
that a hundred huge elephants were attacking.
The Pāṇḍavas were decimated by Bhagadatta's elephant

48 Like the Dānavas
by Devarāja-Indra riding his elephant named Airāvata.
As the Pāñcālas fled in all directions,

49 A deafening cacophony
arose from their terrified horses and elephants.
While the Pāṇḍavas reeled under Bhagadatta's attack,

50 Infuriated Bhīma
once again rushed at the Prāgjyotiṣa ruler.
Splashed with water-jets from the elephant's trunk,

51 Pārtha-Bhīma's horses panicked
and galloped away in fear from the field.
Akṛtī's son Ruciparvat attacked the elephant

52 From a speeding chariot
and wounded the beast with a shower of arrows.
With a knotted arrow fired at Ruciparvat

53 The handsome-limbed ruler
of the hill-regions sent his enemy to death's realm.
With Ruciparvat's fall Abhimanyu and Draupadī's sons

54 And Cekitāna and Dhṛṣṭaketu
and Yuyutsu rushed at the elephant
with murderous frenzy and rained arrows at it

55 With fearful roars
like clouds drenching a huge mountain.
Goaded with spurs and hooks by its mahout

56 The elephant charged
with trunk stretched straight and ears pulled back.
It crushed Yuyutsu's horses and mangled his charioteer.

57 O rājā
Yuyutsu leapt out of his chariot and fled.
The Pāṇḍavas attacked the beast with arrows

58 As thick as rain
and shouted their fierce war-cries.
Your son Yuyutsu climbed into Abhimanyu's chariot.

59 Riding his elephant
Bhagadatta fired arrows that radiated from him
like sunrays shooting out of the sun.

60 Arjuna's son Abhimanyu
fired twelve arrows at him and Yuyutsu ten
while Draupadī's sons and Dhṛṣṭaketu fired ten.

61 The well-aimed arrows
studded the elephant's body like sun-rays
embedded in a mass of dark rain-clouds.

62 Goaded by its rider
but smarting under the enemy's arrows
the elephant hurled soldiers right and left.

63 Like a cowherd
beating cows with a stick in a forest
Bhagadatta beat his foes on that battlefield.

64 Like crows cawing
when swooped upon by a hawk
the Pāṇḍavas screamed as they fled.

65 The excellent elephant
when pricked by the hook
resembled O king
a fast-flying mountain
spreading despair
and fear among foes,
like a storm on an ocean
that terrifies traders
on money-making missions.

66 A deafening din
arose on the field
from the horses and elephants,
kings and chariot-heroes,
filling the earth
and the points of the sky.

67 From the back of the elephant
Bhagadatta the earth-lord
harassed his foes
like the anti-god Virocana
confusing the confident
gods in the past.

68 The fire-friend wind
blew clouds of dust
obscuring the armies,
and one charging elephant
appeared to many
as a thousand-fold herd.

## SECTION TWENTY-SEVEN

1 O mahā-muscled one (continued Sañjaya),
you asked about Pārtha-Arjuna
and his feats in battle.
I will now narrate them to you.

2 Observing the dust
swirling on the field and the agitation
among the soldiers oppressed by Bhagadatta
Kuntī's son Arjuna said to Krishna:

3 "The Prāgjyotiṣa-rājā O Madhusūdana-Krishna
has led his elephant to the thick of the battle
and this noisy chaos is caused by him.

4 He is strong as Indra
and in such control of his elephant
I think he must be the world's best elephant-
warrior.

5 His elephant too
is the pick of the breed with no equal
being weapons-proof and untiring and skilled
in tactics.

6 The elephant singly O immaculate Krishna
can wipe out the Pāṇḍava forces
for he can withstand not only arrows but fire.

7 Excepting the two of us
there is none who dares face that elephant.
Drive me therefore to battle with the
Prāgjyotiṣa king.

8 I will today pack off
to heaven as Indra's very special guest
this ego-ridden enemy showing off his
elephant-skills."

9 Before Arjuna had finished
Krishna sped the chariot to the spot
where Bhagadatta was harassing the Pāṇḍava
forces.

10 Seeing Arjuna advancing
fourteen thousand do-or-die *saṁśaptaka*
mahā-chariot-heroes challenged him to battle.

11 Of the fourteen thousand
ten thousand mahā-chariot-heroes were Trigartas
and four thousand were Vāsudeva-Nārāyaṇī
warriors.

12 Seeing his own warriors O honour-bestowing monarch
being decimated by Bhagadatta on one side
and the *saṁśaptaka* challenge on the other
Arjuna was in two minds.

13 He thought:
*Should I now accept the* saṁśaptaka *challenge*
*or shall I hurry to Yudhiṣṭhira? Which is better?*

14 O most excellent Kaurava!
Arjuna thought it out with intelligent reasoning
and decided to destroy the *saṁśaptakas.*

15 Indra's son Vāsavi-Arjuna
flying the ape-emblemed war-flag
swerved his chariot to battle singlehanded
and destroy the thousands of chariot-heroes.

16 This was exactly
the strategy of Karṇa and Duryodhana:
to ensure Arjuna's death by a double clash.

17 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
had wavered briefly but quickly resolved
to concentrate on attacking the *saṁśaptakas* first.

18 O rājā
the do-or-die *saṁśaptaka* mahā-chariot-heroes
deluged Arjuna with thousands of knotted arrows.

19 The massive shower obscured
Kuntī's son Pārtha-Arjuna and Janārdana-Krishna
so densely that they could not be seen.

20 Janārdana-Krishna
was bathed in sweat and about to swoon
when Arjuna destroyed all with his Brāhma-missile.

21 Hundreds of arms
chopped-off but clutching bows and arrows
and charioteers and horses and flagstaffs
toppled on the ground.

22 Hill-huge elephants
resembling dark rain-clouds
fell with their riders under Pārtha-Arjuna's attack.

23 Fatally wounded
many horses collapsed with riders still clutching
the shredded remnants of reins and trappings.

24 Diadem-wearing Kirīṭin-Arjuna
shot broad-head *bhalla*-arrows that severed the arms
of soldiers clutching swords and maces and battle-axes.

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25 Sliced by Arjuna's arrows O honour-bestowing monarch
heads as radiant as the rising sun
or the moon or the lotus
fell on the ground.

26 Infuriated Phālguna-Arjuna.
continued his ceaseless slaughter of his enemies
with deadly arrows that flashed to their targets.

27 "*Sādhu! Sādhu!* Excellent! Excellent!"
rose in praise of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
as he crushed his enemies
like an elephant trampling lotus-stalks.

28 Seeing the feat of Pārtha-Arjuna
who equalled Vāsava-Indra in prowess
astonished Mādhava-Krishna
joined his hands in *añjali* and said:

29 "Pārtha-Arjuna! In my opinion
what you have done on the field today
cannot be equalled by Śakra-Indra
or Yama or Dhanada-Kubera.

30 I have seen you
kill singlehanded hundreds and thousands
of do-or-die *saṁśaptaka* mahā-chariot-heroes."

31 Arjuna replied
after the *saṁśaptaka*-warriors had been eliminated:
"Krishna! Now take me to Bhagadatta."

## SECTION TWENTY-EIGHT

1 Sañjaya continued:
Requested by Pārthā-Arjuna to advance against Droṇa
Krishna urged the gold-decorated mind-swift white horses.

2 Seeing the incomparable Kaurava Arjuna advancing
towards the Droṇa-oppressed Pāṇḍava brothers
Suśarmā and his brothers challenged Arjuna.

3 White-horsed Śvetavāhana-Arjuna
said to invincible Krishna: "Acyuta-Krishna!
Suśarmā and his brothers have challenged me.

4 On the other side
my army is in great peril, Madhusūdana-Krishna.
The *saṁśaptakas* are again confusing me.

5 What should I do?
Shall I kill these *saṁśaptakas* first
or shall I go to the rescue of my army?"

6 Without a word
Dāśārha-Krishna wheeled the chariot and drove
Arjuna to the spot where Suśarmā was waiting.

7 With seven swift arrows
Arjuna wounded Suśarmā and with two more
he sliced the bow and flagstaff.

8 With six swift arrows
Pārtha-Arjuna despatched to the realm of Yama
Suśarmā's brother as well as his charioteer and
horses.

9 Suśarmā hurled at Arjuna
an iron *śakti*-missile resembling a snake
and a huge lance at Vāsudeva-Krishna

10 Splintering the *śakti*
with three arrows and the lance with three more
Arjuna fired arrows that forced the bewildered
Suśarmā to retreat

11 No one in your army O rājā
dared to confront Arjuna as he rained arrows
at your warriors like Vāsava-Indra sending
showers.

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12 Like fire spreading
as it consumes heaps of grass and fuel
Arjuna advanced towards the Kaurava mahā-chariot-heroes.

13 Just as fire
cannot be touched by a sensitive hand
Arjuna could not be checked by the Kauravas.

14 O rājā! Like Garuḍa swooping
Pāṇḍava-Arjuna swept down on the Prāgjyotiṣa-ruler
with his irressistible showers of arrows.

15 The magnificent bow
that was always used for the benefit of the Pāṇḍavas
and always reduced the enemy to tearful defeat –

16 That special bow O rājā
was now grasped by always-victorious Arjuna
for the destruction of the Kṣatriyas
which started when your son cheated at dice.

17 Mahārāja
under the impact of Pārtha-Arjuna's onslaught
your soldiers foundered like a boat on a rock.

18 Ten thousand bowmen
in a fit of bravery ignoring defeat or victory
suddenly attacked Arjuna.

19 Those mahā-chariot-heroes
succeeded fearlessly in encircling Pārtha-Arjuna
who faced this challenge with great fortitude.

20 Pārtha-Arjuna routed them
with the ferocity of a rutting six-year-old elephant
trampling a cluster of lotus plants.

21 As the massacre
of the warriors was going on
Bhagadatta riding the same elephant
attacked Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

22 Tiger-among-men chariot-riding Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
faced the attack of elephant-borne Bhagadatta
and chariot met elephant in gory clash.

23 Arjuna's chariot
was equipped with every recommended weapon
and Bhagadatta's elephant similarly armed.

24 Halting his cloud-huge elephant
Bhagadatta released a shower of arrows
at Dhanañjaya-Arjuna like Indra sending rain.

25 Indra's son Vāsavi-Arjuna
fired a counter-shower that successfully neutralised
the arrows of Bhagadatta in mid-flight.

26 O favour-bestowing monarch! The Prāgjyotiṣa rājā
withstood the attack of mahā-muscled-Arjuna
and wounded Pārtha-Arjuna and Krishna
with a fresh arrow-volley.

27 Pinning down Acyuta-Krishna and Pārtha-Arjuna
with an impenetrable net of arrows
Bhagadatta charged straight at their chariot.

28 Seeing the raging elephant
charging headlong like Antaka-Death upon them
Janārdana-Krishna quickly swerved the chariot
to the right.

29 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna refrained
from seizing this chance to kill elephant and rider
because it would violate the dharma of combat.

30 O honour-bestowing monarch!
That elephant had sent numerous elephants
and chariots and horses to the realm of Death.
That is what infuriated Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

SECTION TWENTY-NINE

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"What did angered Pāṇḍava-Arjuna do
to Bhagadatta?
What did Prāgjyotiṣa Bhagadatta do
to Pārtha-Arjuna
Tell me all in detail."

2 Sañjaya replied:
Everyone thought Dāśārha-Krishna and
Pāṇḍava-Arjuna to be
in Death's jaws as they fought the Prāgjyotiṣa ruler.

3 *Prabhu* Mahārāja
from the back of his elephant the Prāgjyotiṣa ruler
shot a ceaseless stream of arrows on Krishna
and Arjuna.

4 Shooting iron shafts
with golden wings and sharpened on stone
released from a bow pulled fully taut
Bhagadatta wounded Devakī's son Krishna.

5 They pierced Devakī's son
for they were fire-bright excellent arrows
and embedded themselves in the earth.

6 Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Arjuna
sliced Bhagadatta's bow and killed the warrior
protecting his flank
as if playing a game with the rājā.

7 Bhagadatta hurled
fourteen sharp and sun-bright lances at Arjuna
who ambidexterously cut each in two pieces.

8 The arrows of Pākaśasani-Arjuna
shredded the armour on Bhagadatta's elephant
and it fell in fragments on the ground.

9 Its armour shredded
and its body pierced with countless arrows
the elephant looked like a cloudless mountain
with rain-rivulets running down its slopes.

10 The Prāgjyotiṣa ruler
hurled at Vāsudeva-Krishna a gold-bodied
iron-headed *śakti*
but Arjuna sliced that missile in two.

11 After shredding with arrows
the umbrella and war-flag of that mountain-lord
Arjuna smilingly wounded him with ten arrows.

12 Wounded by Pāṇḍava Arjuna's arrows
fitted with wings fashioned from *kaṅka*-feathers
lord-of-men Bhagadatta lost his temper.

13 Shouting his war-cry
he hurled lances at white-horsed Arjuna's head
and pierced askew the diadem of Arjuna.

14 Readjusting his diadem
Pāṇḍava Arjuna shouted to Bhagadatta:
"Rājā, look your heart's fill on this world!"

15 The words sent Bhagadatta
into a frenzy of anger and he attacked
Arjuna and Govinda-Krishna with a volley of
arrows.

16 Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Arjuna
splintered Bhagadatta's bow and arrows
and wounded his vital organs
with seventytwo arrows.

17 In great agony
Bhagadatta invoked the Vaiṣṇava-weapon
and charging it with mantras
he directed it at Pāṇḍava-Arjuna's breast.

18 Acting as cover
Keśava-Krishna received upon his own chest
the missile
that had the power to annihilate all creatures.

19 The weapon changed
on Keśava-Krishna's chest into a celestial garland
all-lotus-lovely and all-flower-fresh:

20 A lotus filled
with the power of fire and sun and moon
each petal radiant with flame-like beauty
and quivering with the softest breeze.

21 And Krishna glowed
with that garland on his chest
like a cluster of celestial *tasī*-flowers
Lustrous-haired Keśava-Krishna
slayer of Keśi
son of Śūrasena
wielder of the Śārṅga-bow
glowed like a hill
in the light of a monsoon saṁdhyā-evening
filled with wet clouds.

22 Arjuna turned to Keśava-Krishna
and said sorrowfully: "Defectless Krishna
you had promised to be only my charioteer
and never actually fight for me.
Lotus-eyed one Puṇḍarīkakṣa
that is what you said by way of promise.
Why have you broken your word?

23 When I am helpless
or when I cannot fight back
you are free to come to my aid –
but not when I am capable as now.

24 I have my bow and arrows.
I have the strength to vanquish the worlds
with all their gods and anti-gods and humans.
You know this very well."

25 Vāsudeva-Krishna replied:
"Son of Pṛthā-Kuntī, listen to me. O defectless one!
An old and mysterious story is connected with this.

26 I protect the worlds
by dividing myself into four forms
to ensure the welfare of all creatures.

27 One of my forms
is presently immersed in deep tapasyā
as Nara-Nārāyaṇa in the Badarika-āsharam.
My second form
is Paramātmā engaged in keeping an eye
on the good and not-good deeds of this world.

28 My third form
is what you see in front of you
performing karma in the world of men.
My fourth form
sleeps for thousands of years
on the cosmic ocean of timeless time.

29 This last form
wakes after many thousands of years
and offers boons to those who deserve them.

30 It happened once
that the Earth begged a boon from me
for her antigod son Naraka. Listen to this.

31 'Grant my son
the Vaiṣṇava-weapon and make him invulnerable
to both gods and Dānavas.'

32 I listened
to the prayer of the Earth for her son
and I gave her the unique Vaiṣṇava-weapon.

33 I told her:
'This weapon is for Naraka's protection.
So long as he has it he cannot be killed.

34 With this weapon
your foe-crushing son will be invincible
at all times and in all places.'

35 'So be it!'
said the profound-thinking devī and left satisfied.
Her foe-afflicting son became invincible.

36 O Pārtha-Arjuna! The Prāgjyotiṣa ruler
managed to get this weapon from Naraka.
There is none who is immune to this weapon
not even Indra or Rudra-Śiva., O magnanimous
Arjuna.

37 This is why
for your sake I neutralised this weapon.
Now that mahā-anti-god is without his weapon –
kill him quickly, Pārtha-Arjuna!

38 As I killed Naraka
in the distant past for the world's benefit
you should kill the enemy-of-the-gods
Bhagadatta."

39 Mahātmā Keśava-Krishna's words
inspired Arjuna to fire a deadly volley
of sharp arrows at Bhagadatta.

40 Mahā-minded Arjuna
with the mahā-strength of his arms thrust a lance
between the temples of Bhagadatta's elephant.

41 Like a thunderbolt
splitting open a mountain
Like a snake
slithering inside an ant-hill
That long *nārāca*-lance
thrust deep up to its end-wings.

42 Like a wife
refusing to obey a poverty-stricken husband
the elephant refused to follow Bhagadatta's
urgings.

43 As it collapsed
its tusks pierced the earth.
Screaming horrendously it died.

44 Keśava-Krishna said to Arjuna the Gāṇḍīva-wielder:
"Bhagadatta is a powerful person, Pārtha.
He is a grey-haired experienced warrior.

45 He looks shrewdly
through wrinkled eyes. He is a hero
hard to defeat. To keep his eyes always open
he has tied a band around his forehead."

46 Acting on the deity's advice
Arjuna shot an arrow that sliced the bandage.
Bhagadatta's lids drooped and his eyes closed.

47 The entire world
became an area of darkness for Bhagadatta.
With a single-knotted crescent arrow

48 Pāṇḍava Arjuna struck
the chest of rājā Bhagadatta.
His chest ripped open by diadem-wearing Arjuna,

49 Rājā Bhagadatta
lost his grip on his bow and arrows.
His turban slipped off his head
like a petal of a *palāśa*
when the flower is suddenly shaken.

50 With a garland of gold
round his neck he fell
from the back of his elephant –
like a red *karṇikāra*
uprooted from a hill
by a violent wind.

51 Indra's son Arjuna
in that battle slew a king
the equal of Indra,
the *sakhā* friend of Indra,
and proceeded to crush
the rest of the soldiers
of your massive army,
like a ruthless wind
that uproots forests.

## SECTION THIRTY

1 Sañjaya continued:
After killing the illustrious Prāgjyotiṣa ruler
who was a dear friend of Indra
Arjuna respectfully did *pradakṣiṇa* to Bhagadatta.

2 Vṛṣaka and Acala
the two sons of the rājā of Gāndhāra
both excellent subduers of hostile cities
began their assault on Arjuna.

3 Both attacked Arjuna
from the rear and the front
and harassed him with swift and deadly arrows.

4 With polished arrows
Pārtha-Arjuna shredded the bow and umbrella
and flag and killed the charioteer and horses
of Subala's son Vṛṣaka.

5 Arjuna continued
to oppress with arrows and other weapons
the Gāndhāras led by Subala's son and others.

6 Infuriated Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
sent five hundred weapon-brandishing Gāndhāra heroes
to the realm of Death.

7 Strong-armed Vṛṣaka
jumped down from his horseless chariot
and climbed into his brother's chariot
where he fitted another bow.

8 Riding in one chariot
the two heroic brothers Vṛṣaka and Acala
deluged dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna
with incessant arrow-showers.

9 Your brothers-in-law
the mahātmā heroes Vṛṣaka and Acala
harassed Pārtha-Arjuna with the intensity
of the anti-gods Vṛtra and Bala harassing Indra.

10 The two Gāndhāra heroes
repeatedly lashed at Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
like summer lashing the world with heat
and the monsoon lashing the world with rain.

11 O rājā!
Arjuna with a single arrow killed
tiger-brave Vṛṣaka and Acala riding the same chariot.

12 The two brave brothers O rājā
with pink eyes and long arms
looking like two identical lions
toppled from the chariot.

13 Admired by friends
their bodies fell and lay on the ground
spreading sacred fame in all the ten directions.

14 O lord of the world! Your sons witnessed the death
of their two never-retreating maternal uncles
and tears welled up in their eyes.

15 Māyā-manipulating Śakuni
seeing his brothers killed
created a massive māyā-deception
to confuse the twin Krishnas.

16 Maces and iron-balls
fire-spitters and rocks
darts and bludgeons
swords and tridents
mallets and battle-axes

17 *Kampanas* and scimitars
nails and rods
axes and razors
horseshoe-arrows and pipe-missiles
teeth-edged shafts and bone-arrows

18 *Cakras* and *viśikhas* and lances
and hundreds of other weapons descended
on Arjuna from all the quarters and directions.

19 Asses and camels
buffaloes and tigers
lions and deer
leopards and bears
wolves and vultures
monkeys and snakes

20 And all species of rākṣasas
and birds burning with anger and hunger
fell upon Arjuna from every direction.

21 Kuntī's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
expert in the use of supernatural weapons
countered with a network of arrows.

22 Arjuna's remarkable arrows
sliced through the birds and beasts and reptiles
and created an agonising screaming carnage.

23 Pārtha-Arjuna's chariot
was suddenly shrouded in darkness
and cruel voices shrilled around him.

24 With a brilliant weapon
a lustrous missile known as the Jyoutiṣa
Arjuna scattered that all-enveloping darkness.

25 The darkness disappeared
but fearful billows sprang into life.
To dry up these surging waves, the Āditya-weapon

26 Was fired by Arjuna
which instantly removed them from the field.
All the mahā-deceptions created by Saubala-Śakuni

27 Were cancelled by smiling Arjuna
with the power of his special weapons.
His māyā frustrated and his body assailed

28 By Arjuna's arrows
Śakuni like a coward fled on swift horses.
All-weapons-expert Arjuna with great dexterity

29 Deluged the Kauravas
with incessant showers of arrows.
Routed by Arjuna the army of your son

30 Was split in two like the Gaṅgā
bifurcated by a mountain, mahārāja.
Some bull-brave warriors sought Droṇa's refuge

31 And others escaped O rājā
from diademed Arjuna's attack to Duryodhana.
A cloud of dust obscured Arjuna.

32 But I could hear
the twang of the Gāṇḍīva-bow on my right
and the blare of conches and *dundubhi*-drums.

33 Rising above all
the Gāṇḍīva-reverberation reached the skies.
The warriors on the south of the field

34 Battled with Arjuna.
I was with the division of Droṇa.
Yudhiṣṭhira's army routed our soldiers.

35 Like wind dispersing clouds O Bharata
Arjuna harassed and massacred the soldiers
belonging to the army of your son.

36 He charged like Vāsava-Indra
shooting endless streams of arrows
and not one tiger-brave mahā-bowman
had the power to resist him.

37 Routed by Pārtha-Arjuna
your agonising soldiers fled in all directions
crushing and trampling their fellow-soldiers.

38 The vulture-feathered arrows of Arjuna
fell like locusts on your army
blanketing all the ten directions.

39 Like snakes slithering
to their holes in ant-hills O gracious monarch
those arrows pierced through chariot-heroes
and horses and elephants and foot-soldiers.

40 Arjuna shot only one shaft
for each elephant or horse or soldier
but that single shaft proved fatal in each case.

41 Littered with corpses
of elephants and soldiers
and shaft-shredded horses
and loud with the yells
of jackals and dogs –
a gruesome battlefield!

42 Bewildered by arrows,
father left son,
son abandoned father,
friend deserted friend.
Each for himself –
to be safe from Pārtha-Arjuna.

SECTION THIRTY-ONE

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"How did you feel when the Pāṇḍavas routed
my army and you fled from the field, Sañjaya?

2 Nothing is more difficult
than rallying a broken and scattered army.
Give me all the details, Sañjaya."

3 Sañjaya replied:
Despite the rout of your army, O lord of the world,
many heroes eager to preserve their reputations
and always ready to do good to your son
refused to desert Droṇa.

4 Undeterred they fought Yudhiṣṭhira
at close range with weapons upraised
performing grand feats under Droṇa's leadership.

5 O radiant lord! Taking advantage
of a careless manoeuvre by brave Bhīma
and powerful Sātyaki and mighty Dhṛṣṭadyumna
the Kaurava heroes attacked the Pāṇḍava forces.

6 "Droṇa! Droṇa!"
shouted the zeal-fired and fierce Pāñcālas
while your sons shouted to their followers
"Save Droṇa at all costs!"

7 One side screamed
"Pounce on Droṇa! Pounce on Droṇa!"
and the other side shouted "Save Droṇa!" –
in that dice-game between the Kauravas and
Pāṇḍavas

8 The Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna
rushed to the spot where Droṇa
was harassing the Pāñcāla chariot-heroes.

9 In that gory encounter
in which all rules of combat were ignored
heroes screamed their war-cries and attacked
blindly.

10 The Pāṇḍavas strengthened
their positions till they appeared invulnerable
and recalling the wrongs and injustices done to them
they struck fear in the ranks of their enemies.

11 Driven by war-lust in that mahā-clash
the basically gentle Pāṇḍavas heroes
recklessly rushed to battle to kill Droṇa.

12 The brilliant heroes
seemed to be playing a dice-game on the field
with their lives as stakes
in that terrifying clash of iron against stone.

13 The oldest men there
could not recall ever in their lives
having seen or heard of such a clash.

14 In that scene
of the mahā-slaughter of heroes the earth trembled
as if agitated by a dreadful crushing burden.

15 The screams of your soldiers
as they fought reached to the skies
and pierced the ranks of Yudhiṣṭhira's army.

16 The Pāṇḍava heroes
succeeded in thousands in reaching Droṇa
but were repulsed by the ferocity of his arrows.

17 Seeing them scattered
by the magnificent tactics of Droṇa
the Pāṇḍava general Dhṛṣṭadyumna advanced personally.

18 We witnessed then
the incredible clash between Droṇa and Dhṛṣṭadyumna
a duel in my opinion without parallel.

19 Nīla like a fire
like a fire that reduces houses to ashes
a fire whose sparks are arrows and flames the bow
laid waste the Kaurava heroes.

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20 Droṇa's illustrious son Aśvatthāman
saw Nīla counsuming the Kaurava soldiers
and eager to fight him said smilingly:

21 "What fun is there Nīla
in consuming my countless troops with your flames?
Come and fight me man to man.
Hurl your great anger at me!"

22 Lotus-faced Nīla
fired a volley of arrows at Aśvatthāman
whose body was a lotus-cluster and whose eyes
were lotus-petals.

23 Though severely wounded
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman with ten *bnalla*-arrows
shredded the bow and flag and umbrella of Nīla.

24 Jumping off his chariot
with a shining sword and shield
Nīla swooped like a bird of prey
intending to decapitate Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman.

25 Instead it was Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman
O defectless monarch
who severed from Nīla's muscular neck the head
graced with a sharp nose and dazzling ear-rings.

26 Full-moon-faced Nīla
lotus-skinned Nīla
lotus-eyed Nīla
tall and handsome Nīla
toppled on the earth.

27 The death of energetic Nīla
at the hands of the ācārya's son
spread despair in the ranks of the Pāṇḍavas.

28 O gracious monarch! The mahā-chariot-heroes
of the Pāṇḍava army wondered:
*How will Vāsavi-Arjuna be able to save us?*

29 *He is busy mopping up*
*the remnants of the do-or-die* saṁśpatakas
*and the Nārāyaṇa contingent in the southern sector.*

## SECTION THIRTY-TWO

1 Sañjaya continued:
Unable to tolerate the massacre of his soldiers
Vṛkodara-Bhīma harassed his guru
with sixty arrows and Karṇa with ten

2 Determined to kill Bhīma
Droṇa fired twentysix deep-wounding arrows
that pierced the vital organs of his foe.

3 Pinning down Bhīma
Droṇa fired twentysix deep-wounding arrows
while Karṇa fired twelve and Aśvatthāman
seven.

4 Rājā Duryodhana
attacked Bhīma with six arrows
and Bhīma retaliated by wounding them all –

5 Droṇa with fifty arrows
Duryodhana with twelve
and Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman with eight swift shafts.

6 Screaming his war-cry
he plunged into the thick of the battle.
In that clash in which heroes fought recklessly
and death seemed to be only too common

7 Ajātaśatru-Yudhiṣṭhira determined
to rush to the rescue of Bhīma
and led a strong division to the spot.

8 Mādrī's twin sons
Nakula and Sahadeva together with Sātyaki
and other bull-brave heroes in a united attack

9 Pounced on Droṇa's soldiers
with the objective of piercing the defending
bowmen.
Bhīma and his chariot-heroes shone with valour.

10 The mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa
unswervingly received the concerted assault
of all those war-expert chariot-heroes.

11 Fearless of death
and the loss of their kingdom
your soldiers clashed with the Pāṇḍavas:
horse against horse and chariot against chariot.

12 Swords and *śakti*-missiles
rained on the battlefield
and soldiers fought with huge battle-axes
and with swords that produced rivers of blood.

13 Elephants gored elephants
and riders toppled off elephant-backs
while horse-riders fell down head over heels.

14 Their chests lacerated
with sharp arrows chariot-heroes fell.
As the armour-shredded soldiers fell

15 Elephants trampled them
pulping their heads and chests.
Other elephants crushed other fallen heroes.

16 Many elephants collapsed
and their tusks gored prostrate chariot-heroes
With darts sticking from their trunks

17 Many elephants lumbered
on the battlefield trampling hundreds of soldiers.
Horses and warriors in black steel armour

18 Were crushed to pulp
along with chariot-heroes as if they were reeds.
On beds of vulture-feathered arrows lay kings

19 Humbled with pain
waiting for Kāla to spirit them away.
Rushing in his chariot father slew son

20 And son killed father
in that reckless indescribable chaos.
Axles broken and flags shredded and umbrellas
torn

21 And horses dragging
the shattered remains of smashed yokes . . .
Ear-ringed heads and sword-grasping arms
lopped off . . .

22 Chariots hurled on the ground
and pulverised by massive elephants . . .
Elephants mangled by chariot-heroes' *nārāca*-
arrows . . .

23 *Nārāca*-arrows
flew indiscriminately and sliced elephants
in that mahā-grisly clash of mighty warriors.

24 "Hai, *tāta*!" "Hai, my son!"
"Where are you, *sakhā*-friend?"
"Where are you running?"
"Hit!" "Kill!" Laughing and leaping and screaming

25 The warriors gave vent
to their feelings on the battlefield.
Human and horse and elephant blood flowing

26 In a single stream
on the field coagulated the thick dust
and terrified the cowards who gazed at it.
His chariot-wheel stuck with another's chariot

27 A hero lifted his mace
and pulped the head of his enemy.
Some fought by pulling each other's hair
and some with hard-hitting bare fists

28 And still others
unable to find any way of escaping
scratched with nails and bit with teeth.
Arms brandishing swords were shredded.

29 Other arms
holding bows or hooks or arrows were severed.
Some screaming fought and others fearing fled.

30 Here a hero
quickly decapitated a fast-approaching foe.
There a soldier yelled and fled.
Other soldiers stood paralysed in fear.

31 Some with sharp arrows
killed their fellow-soldiers and others killed
their enemies in that great confusion.
Felled by *nārāca*-arrows a hill-huge elephant

32 Lay on the field
like a river-bank of a river of blood.
Another hill-huge elephant with streams of rutting juice

33 Trampled the bodies
of a fallen chariot-hero and charioteer and horses.
The sight of arms-expert warriors drenched in blood

34 Mangling each other
made the faint-hearted lose consciousness.
Everything on the battlefield was blurred and confused

35 In the thick dust
but the soldiers continued to fight in the haze.
"This is the right moment," said Dhṛṣṭadyumna

36 And led the Pāṇḍavas
into the thick of the battle.
The strong-armed Pāṇḍavas under his command

37 Swept on Droṇa
like a flight of *haṁsa*-swans descending on a lake.
"Run!" "Cut him to pieces!" "Catch him!"

38 Were the shouts
heard near the chariot of invulnerable Droṇa.
Droṇa, Kṛpa, Karṇa, Aśvatthāman, rājā Jayadratha

39 Along with the Avanti princes
Vinda and Anuvinda blocked them with Śalya's help.
Flushed with ārya-dharma the irresistible heroes

40 Of the Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas
pushed towards Droṇa despite the arrow-shower.
In a tremendous burst of anger Droṇa's arrows

41 Created gory havoc O gracious monarch
in the ranks of the Pāñcālas and Pāṇḍavas and Cedis.
The twang of his bow echoed in all the directions

42 With its thunderous noise
and spread terror in the hearts of many.
It was then that Arjuna defeating the *saṁśaptakas*

43 Arrived at the site
where Droṇa was decimating the Pāṇḍavas.
Crossing a blood-water and ripple-arrow lake

44 Of *saṁśaptaka* fury
Phalguna-Arjuna arrived elated with victory.
His renowned and sun-dazzling sign

45 Was seen by us
from far in his ape-emblemed war-flag.
After drying up the *saṁśaptaka*-ocean with his sunray-arrows

46 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
shone on the field like the sun at yuga-end.
Like doom-fire devouring the Kauravas was Arjuna

47 At the end of a yuga
consuming all creatures with weapon-flames.
Pierced by his arrows riders of horses and elephants and chariots

48 Hurtled and fell
with mutilated bodies and hair awry.
They screamed and moaned and howled

49 And others
fatally wounded by Arjuna's arrows dropped dead.
All falling or fallen or fleeing warriors

50 Were spared by Pārtha-Arjuna
in accordance with the vows of a warrior.
The wonder-struck Kaurava warriors broke ranks

51 And fled in panic
wailing "Hai! Hai! O Karṇa! O Karṇa!"
Karṇa heard the piteous cries for help

52 And shouting "Do not fear!"
he rushed to attack Arjuna.
Delighter-of-the-Bharatas
and finest-of Bharata-chariot-heroes

53 All-weapons-expert Karṇa
decided to invoke the power of the Āgneya-weapon.
The radiant missile from Karṇa's refulgent bow

54 Was neutralised
with a flaming net of arrows by Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
Ādhirathi-Karṇa retaliated with another dazzling shower

55 And roared his war-cry
as he shattered each arrow of Arjuna's.
The mahā-chariot-heroes Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Bhīma and Sātyaki

56 Rushed at Karṇa
and assailed him with three straight arrows.
After repulsing Arjuna's arrows Rādhā's son Karṇa

57 Splintered the bows
of each of the three heroes with three arrows.
Without their bows they became venomless snakes.

59 The mahā-*śaktis* sped
flaming towards Adhiratha's son Karṇa.
Slicing each *śakti* with an arrow and shooting arrows.

60 Simultaneously at Pārtha-Arjuna
powerful Karṇa roared out his war-cry.
Arjuna wounded Rādheya-Karṇa with seven arrows

61 And killed Karṇa's younger brother
with an exceptionally sharp arrow.
Arjuna killed Śatruṁjaya with six straight arrows

62 And with a *bhalla*-shaft
he decapitated Vipāṭa who was standing in a chariot.
Watched by Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons diademed Arjuna

63 Killed all three
uterine brothers of the Sūta's son Karṇa.
Bhīma swooped from his chariot like Garuḍa

64 And with his sword
killed fifteen warriors of Karṇa's force.
Re-ascending his chariot and fitting a bow

65 With ten arrows
he wounded Karṇa and with five his charioteer
and horses.
Wielding a splendid sword and shield
Dhṛṣṭadyumna

66 Killed Candravarman
and the Niṣadha-ruler Bṛhatkṣatra.
Re-mounting his chariot the Pāñcāla prince

67 Screamed his war-cry
and pinned down Karṇa with seventythree arrows.
Moon-handsome Sātyaki fitted his bow.

68 And shouting his war-cry he harassed
Sūta-putra Karṇa with sixtyfour arrows.
With two broad-head *bhalla*-arrows he rent
Karṇa's bow

69 And proceeded to wound Karṇa
in the arms and chest with three arrows.
Rājā Duryodhana and Droṇa and Jayadratha

70 Saved Rādhā's son Karṇa
from drowning in the Sātyaki-ocean.
Hundreds of foot-and horse-and elephant-and
chariot-heroes

71 Striking fear in their foes
made a desperate bid to rescue Karṇa.
Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Bhīma, Abhimanyu, Arjuna,

72 With Nakula and Sahadeva
joined forces to protect Sātyaki.
That bowmen-annihilating battle raged

73 Between your soldiers
and their enemies in wild and life-losing abandon.
Foot-and chariot-and elephant-heroes fought
their counterparts

74 As well as horse-warriors
and chariot-heroes battled with elephants and
horses and soldiers
and chariots and foot-soldiers fought elephants
and chariots.
Horses with horses and elephants with elephants
and chariot-heroes with chariot-heroes

75 And soldiers with soldiers
fought in confused and grim earnest.
The battle continued between the fearless
combatants
increasing the population of Death's kingdom
and delighting all flesh-eating creatures.

76 Chariot-heroes killed elephants,
and elephants killed horses,
and chariot-heroes killed horses.
They lay on the ground,
animals and humans,
with ornaments and armour,
in the grip of death,
with their eyes and their tongues
and their teeth protruding.

77 Chariot-heroes and elephant-riders,
foot-soldiers and horsemen
lay dead on the ground.
Elephants crushed elephants,
chariot-heroes killed chariot-heroes,
horses horses, and soldiers soldiers.

78 They lay on the ground
slaughtered by soldiers
with remarkable weapons,
and elephants and horses
trod over them, pressing
them deep in the earth,
and the sharp chariot-wheels
rode over them, churning
the corpses to pulp.

79 The carnage continued
to the joy of the carnivores
and flesh-eating birds;
and the soldiers roamed
berserk on the field,
killing indiscriminately.

80 Their ranks decimated,
the blood-spattered heroes
stared at each other.
The day-making sun set,
and the armies retired, O Bharata,
to their camps for the night.

### SECTION THIRTY-THREE

1 Sañjaya continued:
We were routed by illimitably energetic
Phālguna-Arjuna
and Droṇa's vow remained unfulfilled
because Yudhiṣṭhira was excellently guarded.

2 Your warriors
with their armours shredded accepted defeat
and stood there dust-smeared and anxiety-ridden
staring at the sky's ten directions.

3 With Bhāradvāja-Droṇa's consent
they withdrew from the battlefield
after their humiliation by their determined
enemies.

4 As they withdrew
they heard the guṇa-glory of Phālguna Arjuna
chanted by all
as well as praise for the friendship of Keśava-
Krishna and Arjuna.

5 They spent that night
in silent fear and deep introspection.
At dawn Duryodhana went to Droṇa.

6 His mind was heavy
with thoughts of his enemy's success.
Though angry he said gently to Droṇa:

7 "Finest of the twice-born!
You must think of us as already dead
or why did you let Yudhiṣṭhira escape today?

8 Which enemy
even if he is guarded by the gods and the Pāṇḍavas
can elude your vigilant eyes on the battlefield?

9 You were pleased with me
and you gave me a boon – a useless one.
No noble man ever frustrates a *bhakta's* desire."

10 Bhāradvāja-Droṇa was not pleased
by these words. He replied to the king:
"Do not say this. I am doing my best for you.

11 This whole universe
with its gods and anti-gods
with its Gandharvas and Yakṣas
with its *uraga*-reptiles and rākṣasas
cannot defeat anyone
who is protected by diadem-wearing Arjuna.

12 Only three-eyed Trayambaka-Śiva
can proceed against the army
that has Govinda-Krishna the world-creator
and Arjuna on its side.

13 I give you my word
and this is word that will come true,
*tāta,* dear one:
Today I will kill one of their finest
mahā-chariot-heroes.

14 O rājā! My strategy today
will be impregnable even to the gods.
I ask only that you somehow divert Arjuna.

15 There is nothing
unknown to him and nothing he can not know.
He is already a pastmaster of military skills."

16 Droṇa finished
and the do-or-die *saṁśpataka* warriors
diverted Arjuna to the south of the field.

17 The clash that followed
between Arjuna and his enemies was one
whose equal had never been seen or heard of.

18 O rājā! Droṇa's battle-formation
dazzled and blinded the beholder
like the scorching sun at high noon.

19 O Bharata! Ordered by his uncle Yudhiṣṭhira
Abhimanyu spearheaded his way into
the almost impenetrable *cakra* battle-array.

20 Killing hundreds of soldiers
Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu performed
incredible feats
but while engaged in combat with six warriors
he was killed by Duḥśāsana's son.

21 Lord of the earth! Pṛthivīpāla!
He died fighting – and we were delighted.
The Pāṇḍavas seemed to lose all hope, O rājā.

22 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:
"Sañjaya, Abhimanyu was so young.
News of the death of lion-brave Arjuna's son
has broken my heart.

23 How terrible
is this war-code called Kṣatriya-dharma
that makes power-hungry men kill a small boy!

24 But tell me all O Gāvalgaṇa-Sañjaya
about how a horde of arms-expert warriors
slew that fearless and lovingly brought-up youth.

25 Describe to me Sañjaya
the courage of that reckless son of Subhadrā
as he broke through the ranks of the chariot-
division."

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26 Sañjaya replied:
You are an Indra-among-rājās.
O rājā! I will describe to you in detail
how the slaughter of Saubhadra-Abhimanyu
took place.

27 I will tell you
how that young boy seemed to be playing with us
as he pierced through our chariot-division
and how he harassed the great Kaurava heroes.

28 Just as panic overcomes
the creatures of a tree-creeper-and-shrub-filled
forest
when fire sweeps through it
so panic gripped the warriors of your army.

## SECTION THIRTY-FOUR

1 Sañjaya continued:
The Krishna-advised indefatigable Pāṇḍava
brothers
were incapable of being defeated even by the
gods.

2 In *sattva*-integrity and karma
and noble birth and intelligence and fame and
prosperity
there never was and never will be Yudhiṣṭhira's
equal.

3 Because rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
pursues the path of truth and dharma
and controls his senses and honours Brahmins
he will forever enjoy heaven.

4 O rājā! These three are held as equals:
the World-destroyer at the end of a yuga
Jamadagni's incredibly powerful son Paraśurāma
and Bhīma riding in his chariot.

5 Their is no equal
of Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Arjuna when he rides
to battle with his remarkable Gāṇḍīva-bow

6 Nakula has six virtues:
respect for guru-elders
avoidance of publicity
inborn humility
strict self-control
handsome looks
dauntless courage.

7 Brave Sahadeva
equals the twin Aśvins in
knowledge of the *śrutis*
depth of thought
truth-speaking
sweetness of disposition
handsome looks
and military prowess.

8 All the guṇa-qualities
one sees in Krishna and the Pāṇḍava brothers
were present in Abhimanyu.

9 Abhimanyu equalled
Yudhiṣṭhira in courage
Krishna in character
Bhīma in incredible feats.

10 Abhimanyu equalled Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
in handsomeness and prowess and *śruti*-knowledge
and Nakula and Sahadeva in humility.

11 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"Tell me more about Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu
who was killed in battle, O Sūta."

12 Sañjaya replied: Mahārāja
be patient and bear your unbearable grief
while I report the slaughter of your kinsmen.

13 The *cakra* battle-array
was the idea of ācārya Droṇa and in it he stationed
the rājās each as powerful as Indra.

14 At its head
stood the sun-radiant heroic princes
followed by all the other princes.

15 They were sworn to mutual help
they flew golden war-flags
they were dressed in red
they wore red ornaments.

16 They wore golden neck-chains
they stood under red pennants
they were smeared with sandalpaste and perfume
they came in flowers and fine clothes.

17 Wave upon wave
ten thousand brilliant bowmen eager to fight
they attacked Abhimanyu.

18 Led by your grandson Lakṣmaṇa
they advanced
each ready to share the other's pain
each repeating the other's brave deed

19 Each the other's rival
each determined to seek the other's welfare.
O Indra-among-rājās!
Duryodhana was stationed in the army's centre.

20 Rājā Duryodhana was ringed
by mahā-chariot-heroes Karṇa and Duḥśāsana
and Kṛpa.
With a white umbrella shading his head
he looked as magnificent as the rājā of the gods.

21 Fanned by yak-tails
he shone with the splendour of the sun.
Guarding the year was the army's general Droṇa

22 Reinforcing Droṇa
was the Meru-firm handsome Sindhu-rājā
Jayadratha behind whom was mighty Aśvatthāman

23 Mahārāja
your god-like thirty sons and the gambler
Gāndhāra-rājā as well as Śalya and Bhūriśravas

24 Protected the rear
of the mahā-chariot-hero Sindhu-rājā Jayadratha.
A horripilating battle took place

25 Between your soldiers and the enemy's ranks
With both sides determined to win or die.

## SECTION THIRTY-FIVE

1 Sañjaya continued:
Led Bhīma the Pāṇḍavas advanced
against the massive army-formation of Droṇa.

2 Satyaki, Cekitana, Drupada's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Puissant Kuntibhoja, the mahā-chariot-hero Drupada,

3 Abhimanyu, Kṣatradharman, heroic Brhatkṣatra,
The Cedi-king Dhṛṣṭaketu, Mādrī's twins sons,
Ghaṭotkaca,

4 Puissant Yudhāmanyu, undefeatable Śikhaṇḍin,
Impossible-to-subdue Uttamaujas, the mahā-
chariot-her Virāṭa

5 Draupadi's incensed sons, Śiśupāla's powerful son,
The brave Kekaya princes, thousands of Sṛñjayas –

6 These and many other
undefeated warriors expert in the use of weapons
rushed in a body to attack Bhāradvāja-Droṇa.

7 Valiant indeed was Droṇa,
completely unperturbed.
With a hailstorm of arrows
Droṇa resisted the enemy's assault.

8 Like a torrent
blocked by a mountain
Like an ocean-tide
checked by its shores
The Pāṇḍava warriors
were stopped by Droṇa.

9 Faced with the hail
of arrows that streamed from Droṇa's bow
the Pāṇḍava forces wavered and paused.

10 O rājā! It was magnificent –
such was the brilliance
of Bhāradvāja-Droṇa's arms
that even the Pāñcālas and Srnjayas vacillated.

11 Seeing Drona
in a fit of fury charging towards him
Yudhiṣṭhira wondered how best to block him.

12 Convinced that Droṇa
was incapable of being resisted by anyone else
Yudhiṣṭhira wondered what would be the best
strategy.

13 Speaking to Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu
who equalled Vāsudeva-Krishna
and excelled Phālguna-Arjuna
Yudhiṣṭhira said:

14 "Act in a manner
that escapes Arjuna's rebuke when he returns.
None of us knows how to pierce the *cakra-vyūha.*

15 O mahā-muscled one! Only you or Arjuna
or Krishna or Pradyumna can penetrate
the circular battle-array. No fifth person.

16 Therefore Abhimanyu *tāta* dear one
live up to the expectations of your father
and your uncles and all the soldiers.

17 Ready your weapons *tāta* dear one
and shatter this strategy of Droṇa
so that Dhanañjaya-Arjuna may not reproach us."

18 Abhimanyu replied:
"I will fight for the victory of my fathers
and pierce the splendid strategy of Droṇa.

19 My father Arjuna
taught me the secret of penetrating this array
but I do not know how to come out of it
should an emergency arise."

20 Yudhiṣṭhira said: "O finest of heroes!
Advance and pierce it and create a passage for us.
We will follow, close behind you, *tāta* dear one.

21 You are like Dhanañjaya-Arjuna himself.
We will be behind you to help you
as you cut your way through hostile ranks."

22 Bhīma said:
"I will be behind you with Dhṛṣṭadyumna
and Sātyaki and the Pāñcālas and Kekayas
and Matsyas and Prabhadrakas.

23 Once you enter it
we will massacre the enemy warriors
with repeated blows."

24 Abhimanyu promised:
"I will pierce the impenetrable array of Droṇa
like an angry moth flying into a fire

25 I will today perform
a feat that will bring glory to the lineage
of my mother and my father.
I will please my father and my uncles.

26 Singlehanded
I will be seen by the world's creatures
as a young boy crushing giant enemies.

27 If I fail today
in killing anyone who challenges me
I will not call myself the son
of Pārtha-Arjuna and Subhadrā.

28 If I cannot today
from my single chariot crush the Kṣatriya maṇḍala
into eight pieces
I will not call myself the son of Arjuna."

29 Yudhiṣṭhira said:
"Subhadrā's son, may your strength increase
as you strive to pierce the array of Droṇa.

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30 From our side
you will be reinforced by brilliant bowmen
who are like perfected mortals
or like Rudras and Maruts
who are the equal of Ādityas and Vasus
who are like fire itself."

31 Sañjaya said:
These words of Yudhiṣṭhira inspired Abhimanyu
to order his charioteer:
"Quick, Sumitra, drive me to Droṇa's army."

## SECTION THIRTY-SIX

1 Sañjaya continued:
Abhimanyu did as instructed by wise
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
and ordered his charioteer to proceed towards
Droṇa.

2 "Faster! Faster!"
he ordered his charioteer, O rājā,
who turned to Abhimanyu and said:

3 "Long-lived one!
The Pāṇḍavas have placed a heavy burden on
you.
Before you accept it decide if you can do it.

4 Ācārya Droṇa
is brilliant in warfare and has remarkable
weapons.
You were pampered in your childhood
and you are not yet expert in war-skills."

5 Abhimanyu smiled.
"Charioteer, who is Droṇa?
And who are all these great Kṣatriyas?

6 I can take on
Śakra-Indra riding his elephant Airāvata
and leading the whole army of gods!
I can fight Rudra-Śiva whom all creatures worship.
What do I care for these Kṣatriya warriors?

7 One-sixteenth of me O Sūta's son
could take all of them on without difficulty.
Even if my world-conquering uncle
Viṣṇu-Krishna

8 And my father Arjuna
were to confront me as adversaries today
I will not allow fear to overcome me."
Abhimanyu rejected the advice of his charioteer

9 And again ordered him:
"Drive me instantly to the army of Droṇa!"
The gold-caparisoned three-year old steeds

10 Were urged ahead
by a most reluctant charioteer.
Sumitra drove the chariot towards Droṇa

11 And the wind-swift horses O rājā
rushed straight at the army as directed.
Seeing Abhimanyu charging towards them
the Droṇa-led Kauravas prepared for battle
while the Pāṇḍavas waited for their chance.

12 Like a lion descending
on a herd of elephants,
Abhimanyu the equal
of Arjuna in prowess,
with a war-flag designed
with the *karṇikāra*-tree,
and clad in the finest
of armour, fearlessly
swooped on Droṇa.

13 Droṇa's soldiers
defended their ranks against Abhimanyu's assault.
The confused mêlée resembled
the whirling waters where the Gaṅgā joins the
ocean.

14 O rājā! A hideous battle resulted in which heroes
of both sides butchered each other indiscriminately.

15 In that confusion
Arjuna's son Abhimanyu pierced his way through
even though Droṇa kept a vigilant eye.

16 An unthinkable feat!
With effortless ease he penetrated
that allegedly invulnerable array of Droṇa.

17 In a flash
numerous elephant-and horse-and chariot-riders
and foot-soldiers surrounded foe-destroying
Abhismanyu.

18 Musical instruments sounded
and soldiers shouted war-cries
and slapped their arm-pits and roared like lions
shouting "Stop! Stop!"

19 In that uproar
other voices could be heard: "No! No!"
"Stop!" 'Come back!" "I'm here!" "Come here!"

20 Amid trumpetings of elephants
and tinkling of ornaments and loud laughter
and din of chariot-wheels and horse-hooves
the Kauravas attacked Ārjuni-Abhimanyu.

21 O rājā! Mahā-powerful Abhimanyu
dexterously shot arrows that pierced
the vital organs of his opponents.

22 Mutilated by his arrows
horde upon horde of Kaurava heroes fell
like flights of insects collapsing in a fire.

23 Like a priest
covering a *vedi*-altar with *kuśa*-grass offerings
Abhimanyu covered the earth with mangled
warriors' bodies.

24 Arms with glove-protectors
made of iguana-skin
Arms clutching bows
and deadly arrows
Arms grasping swords
and bucklers

25 Arms clutching lances
and battle-axes
Arms holding maces
and *śakti*-missiles
Arms grasping iron balls
and *kampana*-weapons

26 Arms holding goads
and conch-shells
Arms brandishing spears
and *kacagrahas*
Arms with mallets
and nooses and clubs –

27 Arms with bracelets
and bangles
Arms smeared with perfumes
and unguents –
Were lopped off by Ārjuni-Abhimanyu
in hundreds.

28 O honour-bestowing monarch!
Littered with lopped-off arms dripping blood
the field looked as if strewn with the corpses
of five-headed serpents ripped open by Garuḍa.

29 Heads with handsome noses
and faces and locks
Clean-complexioned heads
graced with ear-rings
Heads that gushed out
fountains of blood
Heads with lips bitten
in fierce anger

30 Heads with garlands
and diadems
Heads with turbans
and pearls and gems
That made them lovely
as the sun or moon
Heads radiant as lotuses
severed at the stem

31 Heads that were scented
with delicate perfumes
Heads that once spoke
softly and sweetly –
Lay on the ground
lopped-off by Phālguni-Abhimanyu.

32 Abhimanyu was like
a fortified Gandharva city
as he roamed over the field
shattering his enemy's chariots
and destroying the equipment
that was loaded in them.
He pulverized their axles
and wheel-guards.

33 He smashed their undercarriages
and shooting terraces
He destroyed their wheels
and lavish decorations.

34 The umbrellas of the chariots
were shredded
The waving flags and pennants
were blown away
The warriors of those chariots
were killed in thousands.

35 Enemy elephants and their riders
their flags and war-hooks
their quivers and coats of mail
and neck-ropes and girths

36 Their bells and umbrellas
and elephants' trunks and tusks –
were mangled and destroyed
by Abhimanyu's sharp arrows.

37 Vanāyuja steeds
Steeds from the hill regions
And steeds from Kāmboja and Bāhlīka
with unswishing ears and tails
with eyes straight and fixed
steeds with the swiftness of wind

38 Well-trained steeds
ridden by expert warriors
armed with swords and *śakti*-missiles
were deprived of the magnificent trappings
of their heads and tails

39 And lay on the field
their tongues lolling and eyes staring
their livers and intestines ripped out
their bells torn and smashed –
a feast for flesh-eating beasts.

40 Their armours and leather-guards
were sliced and shredded
And the steeds writhed and wallowed
in their dung and urine.

41 Having performed this wonderful feat
singlehanded as Viṣṇu did in the past
Abhimanyu destroyed your three-fold force
of chariots and elephants and horses.

42 Like mahā-powerful three-eyed Śiva
when he annihilated the anti-gods
Abhimanyu wrought havoc
in the ranks of your army,

43 Concentrating this time
on the foot-soldiers.
Seeing their army decimated by the arrows
of Subhadrā's son fighting singlehanded,
your sons lost hope
and stared vacantly at the ten directions.

44 Their mouths were dry
Their eyes stared fixedly
Their bodies were bathed in sweat.
Unable to conceive of victory
They panicked and fled.

45 The warriors each other's names
as they ran for their lives
Abandoning their wounded fathers
and sons and brothers
Abandoning their friends and relations
on the field of battle.

46 They fled urging their horses and elephants
To full speed at the top of their voices.

SECTION THIRTY-SEVEN

1 Sañjaya continued:
Seeing his army humbled
by hugely powerful Abhimanyu
Duryodhana in a burst of anger
attacked Saubhadra-Abhimanyu.

2 Droṇa saw rājā Duryodhana
suddenly decide to march against Abhimanyu
and he ordered his soldiers: "Protect the king.

3 Valiant Abhimanyu
in front of our eyes is killing whoever be attacks.
Pounce on him and save the Kaurava king.
Do not fear."

4 Afraid but grateful
the mighty always-victorious warriors
ringed your brave son protectively.

5 Droṇa, Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman, Kṛpa, Karṇa,
Kṛtavarman, Saubala-Śakuni,
Bṛhadbala, the Madra-rājā Śalya, Bhūriśravas, Śala,

6 Paurava and Vṛṣasena – shooting sharp arrows,
These heroes deluged Saubhadra-Abhimanyu with
swift shafts.

7 In the confusion
they sped Duryodhana to safety. Arjuna's son
Abhimanyu chafed seeing Duryodhana snatched
from his mouth.

8 He screamed his war-cry
and forced the mahā-chariot-heroes to retreat
as he drowned them in a hail of arrows.

9 But they re-grouped.
The heroes of your army under Droṇa's command
refused to be frightened by Abhimanyu's
leonine roars.

10 O gracious monarch! Your warriors surrounded
Abhimanyu with their countless chariots
and deluged him with all types of arrows.

11 Your grandson retaliated
with sharp arrows that split the shafts in midflight
and others that wounded his foes. A tremendous feat!

12 But your warriors
angered by the wounds of those fire-painful arrows
and bent on killing the never-retreating Abhimanyu
closed in on Subhadrā's son.

13 O bull-brave Bharata! With shore-strong arrows
Arjuna's son blocked the advance of the ocean
that comprised the countless heroes of your army.

14 Neither Abhimanyu nor your warriors
in their ceaseless and deadly attacks on each other
retreated even minutely.

15 While the clash
continued with deadly and gory ferocity
your son Duḥsaha injured Abhimanyu with nine arrows.

16 Duḥśāsana wounded him
with twelve arrows and Sāradvata-Kṛpa with three
and Droṇa with seventeen snake-venomous shafts.

17 Viviṁśati wounded him
with seventy arrows and Kṛtavarman with seven
Bṛhadbala with eight and Aśvatthāman with seven.

18 Bhūriśravas wounded him
with three arrows and the Madra-king Śalya with six
Śakuni with two and Duryodhana with three.

19 Mahārāja!
Valiant Abhimanyu wounded each with three straight arrows
and seemed to dance on the field waving his bow.

20 Roused by the attempts
of your sons to harass him on the battlefield
Abhimanyu displayed his mahā-brilliant arms-skills.

21 Safe in his chariot
pulled by wind-swift and Garuḍa-swift horses
and completely obedient to the reins-holder
Abhimanyu faced the son of Aśmaka

22 Who blocked him
with ten arrows and shouted "Stop! Stop!"
With ten arrows Abhimanyu cut his horses and flag and charioteer

23 And smilingly proceeded
to slice his bow and arms and his head.
When the Aśmaka-ruler was killed by Abhimanyu

24 The entire army
panicked and scattered helter-skelter.
Karṇa and Kṛpa and Droṇa and Drauni-
Aśvatthāman and Śakuni and Śala,

25 Śala, Bhūriśravas, Kratha, Somadatta, Viviṁśati,
Vṛṣasena, Suṣeṇa, Kundabhedi, Pratardana,

26 Vṛndāraka, Lalittha, Prabāhu, Dīrghalocana,
And Duryodhana deluged Abhimanyu with arrows.

27 Wounded by the shafts
of these mahā-bowmen
Abhimanyu shot an armour-piercing arrow at Karṇa.

28 Like a Pannaga-snake
slithering into its hole an ant-hill
that arrow slid through Karṇa's armour and body.

29 Karṇa shuddered
like a hill trembling in an earthquake
and seemed to be on the verge of collapse.

30 With three sharp arrows
Abhimanyu angrily wounded the three heroes
Suṣeṇa and Dīrghalocana and Kuṇḍabhedi.

31 Karṇa recovered
and retaliated with twentyfive long *nārāca*-
arrows.
Aśvatthāman shot twenty and Kṛtavarman
seven arrows.

32 Śakra-Indra's infuriated grandson
his body prickly with protruding arrows
dominated the field like Antaka-Death with his
noose.

33 He wounded Śalya
who was near him with a thick arrow-shower
and screamed a fear-instilling war-cry.

34 O rājā! Struck by arrows
that pierced his vital organs
Śalya slumped in his chariot and lost
consciousness.

35 Seeing Śalya wounded
seriously by the radiant son of Subhadrā
the soldiers fled in front of Bhāradvāja-Droṇa's
eyes.

36 Seeing mahā-muscled Śalya
riddled with gold-feathered arrows
your soldiers fled like deer from a lion.

37 Applauded by *pitṛs*,
by gods and Cāraṇas,
by Siddhas and Yakṣas,
by all the world's creatures,
for his valour and strength,
Abhimanyu appeared
to blaze on the field
with the radiance of fire
that is fed with ghee.

## SECTION THIRTY-EIGHT

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"Which of my warriors tried to resist Ārjuni-Abhimanyu
in his fierce arrow-onslaught on my army?"

2 Sañjaya replied: O rājā!
I will now describe the magnificent feats
of Abhimanyu as he smashed through Droṇa's chariots.

3 Seeing Śalya losing
his combat with arrow-shooting Saubhadra-Abhimanyu
Śalya's younger brother irately entered the fray.

4 With ten arrows
he perplexed Ārjuni-Abhimanyu's horses and charioteer
and screamed across the field "Stop! Stop!

5 Dexterous-handed Ārjuni-Abhimanyu
aimed arrows that sliced off his foe's head
and neck and his arms and legs
his horses and umbrella and charioteer
and triple flag-pole as well as his chariot-seat

6 Including the wheels
the yokes and shafts and quivers and under-carriage
the flag and the two wheel-protecting heroes.

7 He moved so swiftly
that he could hardly be seen by anyone.
Śalya's brother fell with his armour pierced

8 Like a mountain-crest
toppled by an incredibly strong tempest.
His followers panicked and ran in all directions.

9 "*Sādhu! Sādhu!*" "Excellent! Excellent!"
everyone shouted O Bharata
witnessing the grandeur of Abhimanyu's feat.

10 With Śalya's brother dead
many of his warriors shouted their names
and birth-places
and rushed pell-mell at Ārjuni-Abhimanyu

11 In a fit of fury
brandishing their weapons of all makes and sizes.
Hugely powerful warriors all of them
rushing on horses and chariots and elephants
and on foot.

12 The whistle of their arrows
the mahā-deafening din of their chariots
their war-cries and yells and roars
their lion-like howling

13 The twang of their bows
and the muddled multiplicity of other noises
were calculated to terrify Arjuna's son:
"You will die-today even if we have to die with
you."

14 Subhadrā's son smiled
when he heard them say those words
and carefully fired arrows at those warriors
who were the first to attack him.

15 Arjuna's son Abhimanyu
employed the finest and swiftest weapons
but handled them with the gentlest skill.

16 Like Vāsudeva-Krishna and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Kārṣṇi-Abhimanyu skilfully employed the
weapons
he had obtained from Krishna and Arjuna.

17 The most dreadful dangers
seemed to have no effect on him.
He seemed to shoot arrows in a continuous
stream.

18 The only thing visible
was his bow stretched fully taut
dazzling with the radiance of the sun-maṇḍala
in autumn.

19 The twang of his bow
and the slapping of his arm-pits
resembled the rumble of rain-clouds
and the sound of thunder in the monsoon.

20 Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu
modest and handsome and respectful and unenvious
fought his foes with arrows and other weapons.

21 Mahārāja
like the fierce sun in autumn after the monsoon
Abhimanyu was first gentle and then ruthless.

22 Infuiriated beyond control
he shot hundreds of stone-sharpened gold-winged arrows
like the radiant sun shooting out sun-rays.

23 With horse-shoe-headed arrows
and calf-tooth-headed arrows
with *vipāṭhas* and *nārācas*
and half-moon-shaped arrows
the mahā-illustrious warrior

24 Attacked the chariots
of your army and destroyed them with his arrows
in front of Bhāradvāja-Droṇa's eyes
till the enemy was forced to retreat.

## SECTION THIRTY-NINE

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: "Sañjaya!
When I hear that Subhadrā's son single-handed
fought off the attacks of my entire army
I am filled with both shame and delight.

2 Son of Gavalgaṇa
tell me more about the feats of Abhimanyu
that resemble the feats of Skanda-Kārtikeya
when he fought the anti-gods."

3 Sañjaya replied: I will report everything
in detail about that tumultuous battle
between one and many.

4 Riding his chariot
Abhimanyu fired arrows with his full strength
at your chariot-heroes who fought back with
full strength.

5 Droṇa, Karṇa, Kṛpa, Śalya, Aśvatthāman, Bhoja,
Bṛhadbala, Duryodhana, Bhūriśravas,
and mahā-powerful Śakuni,

6 Together with various kings and princes leading
different contingents,
Were fire-ringed by Abhimanyu as he released his
arrows.

7 He seemed to be everywhere
as he traversed the field valiantly terrorising
the enemy warriors with his swiftness and
ferocity.

8 Seeing these feats effortlessly performed
by supremely-powerful Abhimanyu
your soldiers trembled in fear.

9 The mahā-wise
and brave-in-battle son of Bharadvāja
opened his eyes wide in joy and turned to Kṛpa.

10 O Bharata! Drona saw Abhimanyu
triumphant on the field and said to Kṛpa
words which hurt your sons to the core:

11 "There comes Saubhadra-Abhimanyu
Subhadrā's young son heading the Pāṇḍavas
and bringing joy to rājā Yudhiṣṭhira

12 And to Nakula and Sahadeva
and to Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma as well as to friends
and relatives and sympathisers on the battlefield.

13 I do not think
any bowman can equal him in battle.
He can wipe us all out if he so wishes.
Why does he not wish it?"

14 The words of Droṇa
indicating his delight with Ārjuni-Abhimanyu
infuriated your son Duryodhana who hated Abhimanyu.
He smiled at Droṇa.

15 Then Duryodhana
said to Karṇa and king Bāhlika and Duḥśāsana
as well as Śalya and other mahā-chariot-heroes:

16 "This ācārya
of respected kings who is also a Brahma-knower
is fond of Arjuna's son and will not kill him.

17 This I know is true:
If Droṇa decides to really fight
not even Death can stop him –
leave alone a mortal like Abhimanyu.

18 He spares Abhimanyu
because the son of Arjuna was his pupil.
Dharma-lovers always cherish pupils and their pupils' sons.

19 So Abhimanyu grows
in glory because he is protected by Droṇa!
He is foolish and he is proud.
It is time to finish him off."

20 Roused by the rājā's words
to kill the son of Subhadrā of the Sātvatas
your warriors rushed at Abhimanyu
in front of the very eyes of Bhāradvāja-Droṇa.

21 Tiger-brave Kaurava Duḥśāsana
heard the command of Duryodhana
and replied:

22 "Mahārāja!
I promise you I will kill Abhimanyu
in front of the Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas.

23 Like Rāhu devouring the sun
I will today devour Subhadrā's son."
He raised his voice and said to the Kuru-rājā:

24 "When the two boasting Krishnas –
I mean Krishna and Arjuna – hear that
Abimanyu
has been killed by me, there is no doubt
they will leave this world and go to the spirit-
world.

25 When the cowardly Pāṇḍavas hear
that Krishna and Arjuna have left the earth
they and their allies will all commit suicide.

26 Kill one kill all.
All your enemies will be destroyed at one stroke.
O rājā! Wish me well then as I strike to kill."

27 Maharājā! With these words
your infuriated son Duḥśāsana roared his war-cry
and deluged Saubhadra-Abhimanyu with arrows.

28 Seeing Duḥśāsana advancing
swiftly towards him in a paroxysm of anger
foe-crushing Abhimanyu blocked him with
twentysix sharp arrows.

29 Bursting with anger
like an elephant with its temples lacerated
Duḥśāsana closed in on Subhadrā's son
Abhimanyu.

30 The two excellent heroes
both brilliantly skilled in the arts of war
fought from their chariots as they wove
variegated maṇḍala-patterns on the battlefield.

31 The sound of the drums
and *mṛdaṅgas* and *dundubhis*
and *anakas* and *bheris*
commingling with war-cries
resembled a fusion
of lion-roars and conch-wails.

## SECTION FORTY

1 Sañjaya said:
A fierce combat raged between the two lion-heroes;
and slayer-of-heroes mahā-muscled Saubhadra-Abhimanyu

2 Splintered the bow
of Duḥśāsana and pinned him down dexterously
with an unending volley of arrows.

3 Smiling lightly
Abhimanyu looked at severely wounded Duḥśāsana
and said to him in the presence of all the soldiers:

4 "It is my good luck
that I have before me today on the battlefield
that cruel and proud and dharma-defiling man
who is always eager to find fault with others.

5 Are you not the one
who in the sabhā of rājā Dhṛtarāṣṭra
slandered Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira?

6 Are you not the one
who drunk with success of Śakuni's dice-game
insulted Bhīma with bitter words?

7 The fruit of your deeds
which hurt mahātmā Yudhiṣṭhira then
you see before you today:
the fruit of your rapacity and anger and restlessness,

8 The fruit of your greed
and stupidity and jealousy in depriving
my bow-expert elders of their kingdom.

9 The righteous wrath
of the mahātmā Pāṇḍavas confronts you today!
Taste then the fruit of your dharma, you rascal!

10 In front of the soldiers
I will punish you today with my arrows.
I will free myself of my debt to my elders.

11 O Kaurava! Today I will repay
my debt to angry Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī and Bhīma.
Today I will free myself of all obligations.

12 If you do not run away
you will not escape death at my hands!"
With these words mahā-muscled Abhimanyu

13 Fitted an arrow
with the power of Kāla or Fire or Wind.
The arrow flew towards Duḥśāsana's chest

14 And penetrated his neck
like a *pannaga*-snake slithering inside an ant-hill.
Abhimanyu fired twentyfive more arrows

15 That scorched like fire
and were shot with the bow pulled fully taut.
Grievously wounded Duḥśāsana slumped in his chariot

16 And it appeared to all
that he fell down and lost consciousness.
Duḥśāsana's charioteer quickly drove him away

17 From the battlefield
still unconscious from the impact of Abhimanyu's arrows.
The Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī's five sons and Virāṭa

18 Together with the Kekayas
and Pāñcālas saw this and roared lion-cries.
The Pāṇḍava warriors played many musical instruments

19 In their flush of joy
and stood there smiling and appreciating
the incredible feat of Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu.

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20 Seeing their proud
and unbending enemy Duḥśāsana defeated
the Dharma- and Marut- and Indra- and
Aśvini-emblemed

21 Five mahā-chariot-hero sons of Draupadī,
Sātyaki, Cekitāna, Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Śikhaṇḍin,

22 The Kekaya princes, Dhṛṣṭaketu, the Matsyas and
Pāñcālas and Sṛñjayas,
And the Pāṇḍavas, led by Yudhiṣṭhira, in a burst of
joy,

23 Rushed to battle
in the hope of completely crushing Droṇa's
division.
A bitter battle followed between them and
your soldiers

24 For all were heroes
determined to win and never to retreat.
And so while the terrible clash continued

25 Mahārāja
Duryodhana said to Rādhā's son Karṇa:
"See how Duḥśāsana has been routed by
Abhimanyu

26 Who now kills at will –
and Duḥśāsana was as fiery as the sun!
And there they come like lions with all their
strength –

27 The powerful Pāṇḍavas
eager to reinforce Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu."
Undefeatable Karṇa fired arrows at Abhimanyu

28 In extreme fury
because he desired the welfare of your son.
With the finest and sharpest arrows Karṇa

29 Almost contemptuously
harassed the followers of Subhadrā's son.
While Abhimanyu wounded Rādheya-Karṇa
with seventythree arrows,

30 The deepest desire of mahā-minded Abhimanyu
was to face Droṇa in combat, O rājā.
Not one of the warriors could prevent the
chariot-destroying

31 Grandson of thunder-wielding Vajra-hasta-Indra
from approaching his target – Droṇa.
Eager-for-victory and most-brilliant-of-bowmen
Karṇa

32 Who was Paraśurāma's pupil
and versed in the use of all weapons,
rained hundreds of arrows on Abhimanyu

33 And pressed his attack
on the unvanquishable-in-battle Abhimanyu.
Harassed by the incessant shower of Karṇa's
arrows

34 The god-like warrior Abhimanyu
refused to be dismayed in the least.
With stone-sharpened broad-head *bhalla*-arrows

35 He sliced the soldiers' bows
and kept up a ceaseless attack on Karna.
With venomous arrows fired from a bow pulled
full circle

36 He smilingly sliced
Karṇa's umbrella and flag and horses and
charioteer.
Karṇa retaliated with many knotted arrows

37 But Phālguna-Arjuna's valiant son
received them all with uncaring ease.
In a flash with a single arrow Karṇa's

38 Bow and war-flag
were shredded and scattered on the ground.
Seeing Karṇa's predicament his younger brother

39 Pulled his bow taut
and rushed headlong at Abhimanyu.
The Pāṇḍavas screamed their war-cries
and played a host of musical instruments
loudly celebrating the feat of Subhadrā's son.

SECTION FORTY-ONE

1 Sañjaya continued:
Pulling his bow taut repeatedly and roaring Karṇa's brother
placed himself between the two mahātmā chariot-heroes.

2 He seemed to smile
as he fired ten sharp arrows
as Abhimanyu's charioteer and horses and flagstaff.

3 Those arrows perplexed
even Kārṣṇi-Abhimanyu whose feats equalled
those of his father and grandfather –
and your soldiers were delighted.

4 But Abhimanyu smiled
and with a winged arrow decapitated his enemy
and toppled him from his chariot.

5 O rājā
Karṇa's brother fell like a *karṇikāra* tree
from a hill in a fierce storm
to the great grief of Karṇa.

6 Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu
fired vulture-feathered arrows that drove back
Karṇa and proceeded to harass other warriors.

7 Enraged Abhimanyu
tremendously energetic mahā-chariot-hero
smashed through the ring of horses and elephants and soldiers.

8 In the meantime
under the onslaught of Abhimanyu's arrows
Karṇa had removed himself from the field
and your army was on the brink of panic.

9 Nothing was visible O rājā
for the sky was shrouded
with Abhimanyu's arrows falling like heavy rain
or swarms of *śalabha*-locusts.

10 O rājā! Of the many warriors
oppressed by Abhimanyu with his sharp arrows
none remained on the field except Saindhava-
Jayadratha.

11 Blowing his conch O bull-brave Bharata
that bull-among-men son of Subhadrā
pounced on the army of your son.

12 Ārjuni-Abhimanyu
swept through the hosts of Kaurava warriors
like fire consuming heaps of dry grass.

13 Piercing the formation
he slaughtered chariot-heroes and horse-riders
and foot-soldiers
and littered the field with headless bodies.

14 Decimated by his arrows
the Kaurava soldiers fled in panic
killing their own warriors in the confusion.

15 The earth was riddled
with arrows fearful to sight and fatal to touch
that had pierced clean through the bodies
of chariot-heroes and elephants and horses.

16 Arms lay on the ground
glittering with ornaments and clutching weapons
like maces with finger-protectors still held tight.

17 Strewn on the ground in hundreds
were arrows and bows and swords
and corpses with ear-ringed heads and garlands.

18 *Upaskaras*
chariot-seats
long poles
shattered *akṣas*
and axles

19 *Śakti*-missiles
bows and arrows
swords
toppled flag-poles
in fragments
littered the field

20 O lord of the world
together with corpses
of Kṣatriyas
and horses
and elephants –
a horrendously
choked battlefield!

21 As Abhimanyu proceeded
with his relentless slaughter of the Kauravas
they shouted each other's names
increasing the fear and cowardice of cowards.

22 O incomparable Bharata! The noise filled the sky
covering all the ten directions of the horizon
while Abhimanyu continued with his massacre
of chariot-heroes and horses and elephants.

23 He consumed them
as fire consumes a heap of dry grass
working from the very centre of the Kaurava
force.

24 Ringed by your soldiers
and shrouded in dust he could not be seen
as he rushed through all the ten directions.

25 Then suddenly O Bharata
he would come into sight
like the radiant midday sun
while he went on killing
men and horses and elephants.

26 Mahārāja
we saw Abhimanyu in the middle of the soldiers
Vāsava-Indra's grandson Abhimanyu
the equal of Vāsava-Indra himself
like heroic Vahni's son Kārtikeya in the middle
of the anti-gods in the battle of long long ago.

## SECTION FORTY-TWO

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"When Abhimanyu who was a pampered youth
noble and skilled but proud and death-
defying

2 Pierced through our ranks
on his three-year old splendid chariot-horses
which of Yudhiṣṭhira's warriors followed him?"

3 Sañjaya replied: Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Śikhaṇḍin,
Sātyaki, the twins,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Virāṭa, Drupada, the Kekaya princes,

4 Dhṛṣṭaketu and the Matsyas all rushed to the battle.
Abhimanyu's sires and maternal uncles made an array

5 That penetrated quickly
the Kaurava ranks following his example.
Seeing them advance, your soldiers fled.

6 With your army panicking
your son-in-law Jayadratha rushed to the spot
trying desperately to rally them.

7 Mahārāja
rājā Jayadratha of the Sindhus blocked the
Pāṇḍavas
when they came to the aid of Abhimanyu.

8 Bṛhadkṣatra's son Jayadratha
displayed his brilliant prowess as a mahā-
bowman
and with the strength of his supernatural weapons
he checked the Pāṇḍavas
like an elephant dominating a flat area.

9 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:
"It seems to me Jayadratha had a difficult task
because he had to face the brunt
of the Pāṇḍavas' effort to rescue their son.

10 It seems to me Sañjaya
that the Sindhu-ruler must be very brave indeed.
Tell me more about that mahātmā's glorious deeds.

[VII:42:11-18]

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11 What gifts did he lavish?
What sacrifice did he perform? What tapasyā did he practise
What gave the Sindhu-rājā strength
to face singlehanded the attack of the Pāṇḍavas?

12 O excellent Sūta! What discipline
what brahmacarya did he practise?
What god did he propitiate:
Viṣṇu or Iśāna-Śiva or Abjaja-Brahmā?

13 How did the Sindhu-rājā
summon courage to resist the Pāṇḍavas?
I cannot recall even Bhīṣma doing such a mahā-feat."

14 Sañjaya replied:
Jayadratha abducted Draupadī and Bhīma humiliated him.
To expiate the shame the rājā performed mahā-tapasyā
in order to obtain a boon.

15 Controlling his senses
from all things pleasurable
and enduring hunger and thirst
he emaciated himself
till all his veins swelled.

16 Chanting the eternal songs of the Vedas
he propitiated Śarva-Śiva.
Bhagavān Śiva
always gracious to *bhaktas*
took pity on him.

17 Appearing to him in a vision
Hara-Śiva said to the Sindhu-lord:
"I am pleased with you:
*Prīto'smi.*
Ask a boon, Jayadratha."

18 The rājā of the Sindhus
Jayadratha
folded his palms in *añjali* before Śarva-Śiva
and with disciplined ātman said:

19 "Only this:
Grant me strength
to rout the Pāṇḍavas
from my chariot singlehanded
in spite of their prowess and courage."
O Bharata descendant!

20 The god of gods Deveśa
said to Jayadratha:
"I grant your boon.
With the exception of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna

21 You will vanquish
the other four sons of Pāṇḍu."
Jayadratha said to Deveśa-Śiva
"So be it"
and came out of his vision.

22 That is how by divine boon
he was able to use his supernatural weapons
to check the advance of the Pāṇḍavas
singlehanded.

23 The twang of his bow
sent shuddering fear in the enemy camp
and filled the hearts of your soldiers with joy.

24 Your brave Kṣatriyas O rājā
saw Jayadratha singlehanded facing the
Pāṇḍavas
and shouting their war-cries
they rushed in a body to attack Yudhiṣṭhira.

## SECTION FORTY-THREE

1 Sañjaya said:
O Indra-among-rājās, you have enquired
about Jayadratha.
Listen to me while I give full details of the way
in which the Sindhu-rājā fought with
the Pāṇḍavas

2 The finest Sindhu horses
wind-swift and obedient to their charioteer
drove him to battle.

3 His fully-armed chariot
with its mahā-war-emblem of a silver-white boar
shone with the splendour of a flying castle.

4 O rājā! He looked magnificent
with white umbrellas and yak-tail fans and flags
like the moon among clusters of stars.

5 His chariot-fame
was studded with gold and pearls and diamonds
and glittered like the sky bright with planets.

6 Pulling his mahā-bow taut
he shot streams of arrows is to fill the breaches
made by Ārjuni-Abhimanyu in the ranks of the Kauravas.

7 With three arrows
he wounded Sātyaki and wolf-waisted Bhīma with eight
Dhṛṣṭadyumna with sixty and Virāṭa with ten.

8 With five arrows
he wounded Drupada and Śikhaṇḍin with ten
the Kekaya princes with twentyfive arrows
and the sons of Draupadī with three arrows each.

9 With seventy arrows
he wounded Yudhiṣṭhira and oppressed the rest
with a massive deluge of arrows – a splendid feat!

10 Smilling as he did so
Dharma's powerful son rājā Yudhiṣṭhira with one sharp arrow
sliced the excellent bow of the Sindhu-ruler.

11 In a flash
Jayadratha strung another bow and wounded Yudhiṣṭhira
with ten arrows and his followers with three shafts each.

12 Jayadratha's dexterity
impressed Bhīma and with three *bhalla*-arrows
he smashed Jayadratha's bow and flagstaff
and umbrella.

13 O honour-bestowing monarch!
Jayadratha picked up another bow and cut down
Bhīma's flag-staff and bow and horses.

14 His bow splintered
Bhima leapt out of his horseless chariot
and jumped into the chariot of Sātyaki
like a lion bounding atop a hill.

15 Wild with joy
your soldiers screamed "*Sādhu! Sādhu!*"
"Excellent! Excellent!"
repeatedly applauding the feat of the Sindhu-rājā.

16 And all creatures
pūjā-praised the exploit of Jayadratha who
blocked
the entire Pāṇḍava force by the strength of his
weapons.

17 The opening Saubhadra-Abhimanyu
had created for his Pāṇḍava followers
by killing hosts of Kaurava soldiers and
elephants
was now successfully blocked by Saindhava-
Jayadratha.

18 Exerting their utmost
the Matsyas and Pāñcālas and Kekayas and
Pāṇḍavas
tried to follow Abhimanyu but were blocked
by Jayadratha.

19 Each of your enemies
who tried slipping through Droṇa's battle-
formation
was blocked by the ruler of the Sindhus
who had obtained the boon from Śiva.

SECTION FORTY-FOUR

1 Sañjaya continued:
With the blocking by Saindhava-Jayadratha of the victory-hungry Pāṇḍavas
a gory clash took between your soldiers and theirs.

2 Piercing his way through your ranks
invincible and true-aimed and energetic Arjunī-Abhimanyu
stirred your troops like a *makara*-whale agitating the ocean.

3 In accordance with rank
the Kaurava heroes advanced against foe-crushing-Abhimanyu.
as he devastated his enemies with his arrows.

4 It was horrendous –
that battle between Abhimanyu and the warriors
shooting arrows in thick coagulated showers.

5 Hemmed in by chariots
Arjuna's son Abhimanyu killed the charioteer
of Vṛṣasena and splintered Vṛṣasena's bow.

6 Heroic Abhimanyu
attacked Vṛṣasena's wind-swift horses with straight arrows
and they galloped away from the battlefield.

7 Abhimanyu's charioteer
seized his chance to slip through the enemy ring
and the soldiers shouted "*Sādhu! Sādhu!*"
"Excellent! Excellent!"

8 While Abhimanyu
angrily crushed his foes like a lion mauling deer
Vasātīya suddenly pounced upon him.

9 With sixty gold-winged arrows
Vasātīya harassed Abhimanyu and shouted:
"You cannot escape alive so long as I'm alive!"

10 Even as he said this
iron-mail-clad Saubhadra-Abhimanyu shot a long-flying arrow
that struck his chest and he fell down dead.

11 O rājā! Seeing Vasātīya fall
the excellent Kaurava Kṣatriyas in raging fury
surrounded your grandson intending to kill him.

12 They pulled their bows taut
in a variety of ways and a fierce fight
took place between them and Subhadrā's son

13 Agitated Phālguni-Abhimanyu
shredded their bows and arrows and mangled their bodies
and their ear-ringed and flower-garlanded heads.

14 Chopped-off gold-ornamented arms
strewed the field with finger-protectors on
and clutcing swords and spears and axes and bludgeons.

15 Flower-garlands
ornaments
dresses
flagstaffs
coats-of-mail
shields
golden chains
diadems
umbrellas and *cāmaras*

16 Yokes
axles
shafts of chariots
shattered wheels
and *akṣas*
and countless harnesses.

17 *Anukaraṣas*
pennants
smashed chariots
elephants
horses
toppled charioteers . . .

18 A gruesome spectacle!
The field was littered with the corpses of Kṣatriyas
who had come from far and near seeking victory.

19 As he whirled
all over the field covering all ten directions
swift Abhimanyu could not even be seen.

20 Only his golden armour
and his shield and ornaments and bow and arrows
could be glimpsed by us now and then.

21 He was present
in his enemies' midst like the scorching sun
and none dared even look at him
as he systematically slaughtered his adversaries.

## SECTION FORTY-FIVE

1 Sañjaya continued:
As Ārjunī-Abhimanyu carried on his massacre of the heroes
he resembled Kāla-Antaka at the time of universal doom.

2 Equal-of-Śakra-Indra
the grandson of Indra harassed your warriors
as if he would annihilate the entire array.

3 O Indra-among-rājās! Abhimanyu pierced
the ranks of his brave-as-Indra enemies like Antaka-Yama
and pounced on Satyaśravas like a tiger on a deer.

4 With Satyaśravas dead
the other mahā-chariot-heroes quickly readied their weapons
and rushed to attack Abhimanyu.

5 "I first!" "I first!"
– shouting and boasting the bull-brave Kṣatriyas
fell upon Abhmanyu determined to kill him.

6 Abhimanyu faced
the wave upon wave of hostile Kṣatriyas
like a *timi*-whale swallowing a shoal of small fish.

7 They clashed with Abhimanyu
and not one returned who was not a coward
like never-reversing rivers that flow to the ocean.

8 Your army tossed
like a boat on a mahā-tempest-agitated ocean
whose crew shudders at the wind's vehemence.

9 The Madra-ruler's son Rukmartha
hoping to re-instil courage in his panicking soldiers
said fearlessly:

10 "Take heart, heroes!
What is Abhimanyu so long as I am here?
I will take him prisoner today. Trust me!"

11 With these words
that heroic warrior sped towards Abhimanyu
in a dazzling chariot loaded with all war-weapons.

12 With three arrows
he grazed Abhimanyu and screamed his war-cry
and with three more he wounded Abhimanyu's shoulders.

13 But Phālguni-Abhimanyu retaliated
by slicing his bow and cutting off both his arms
and decapitating his large-eyed and thick-eye-browed-head.

14 Seeing Salya's son Rukmaratha who had vowed
to capture Abhimanyu dead or alive
cut down by Saubhadra-Abhimanyu

15 Many brave-warriors O rājā
who were his friends and who excelled in combat
rushed Abhimanyu with flags flying high on golden poles.

16 Those mahā-powerful heroes
pulled taut their palmyra-tall bows
and deluged Ārjuni-Abhimanyu with a hail of arrows.

17 Seeing single never-defeated Abhimanyu
attacked by a host of brave and angry princes
skilled in combat through intensive experience

18 And seeing him deluged
with a hail of arrows
Duryodhana was delighted and he assumed
that Abhimanyu had entered
the abode of Vaivasvata-Yama.

19 Before one could blink
those young princes had shot sharp gold-winged arrows
that totally shrouded Arjuna's son Abhimanyu.

20 O honour bestowing monarch!
It appeared to us that a swarm of locusts
had settled on Abhimanyu's chariot and charioteer
and war-flag.

21 O Bharata! Like a wounded elephant
the arrow-harassed son of Arjuna burst into anger
and invoked the Gandharva-weapon
capable of producing chariot-baffling māyā.

22 It was Arjuna's tapasyā
that obtained this weapon from Tumburu and others
and it was Abhimanyu stupefying his foes with it.

23 O rājā!
He was one and a hundred and a thousand!
He flashed across the field like a circle of fire.

24 Baffling his enemies
with the dazzle of his chariot and weapons and coat-of-mail
he mangled and mutilated them in hundreds of pieces.

25 O rājā! His arrows sucked
the *prāṇa* life-breaths of the field's creatures
who fell on the earth like lifeless hulks.

26 With his sharp arrows
Phālguni-Abhimanyu sliced off their bows and flagstaffs
and wounded their horses and charioteers
and their bracelet-graced arms and handsome heads.

27 The hundreds of princes
were mangled and killed by Saubhadra-Abhimany
like five-year-old mango trees about to fruit
shattered by a severe storm.

28 When Duryodhana saw
the young well-reared princes who could sting like snakes
killed singlehanded by Arjuna's son Abhimanyu
he was afraid.

29 When Duryodhana saw
his chariot-heroes and elephants getting decimated
his horses and foot-soldiers mutilated and killed
he rushed swiftly and angrily at Abhimanyu.

30 In the fierce combat
that remained unresolved between Duryodhana and Abhimanyu
it was your son who retreated from the field
assailed by hundreds of arrows.

## SECTION FORTY-SIX

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"What you tell me about the gory battle
between one and many
and mahātmā Abhimanyu's victory

2 Is wonderful and unbelievable.
The account of Abhimanyu's prowes
is to be expected of anyone
who follows the principles of dharma.

3 After the retreat
of my son Duryodhana and the hundred princes' deaths
what steps did my soldiers take against Abhimanyu?"

4 Sañjaya replied:
Their throats became parched and their eyes rolled.
They sweated profusely and horripilated.
They despaired of victory and planned to flee.

5 They suddenly fled
furiously urging their horses and elephants
and forsaking dead brothers and fathers and sons and friends.

6 Seeing the soldiers fleeing
Droṇa and his son Aśvatthāman with Bṛhadbala and Kṛpa

7 Were roused to fury O rājā
and launched a concerted attack on invincible Abhimanyu.
But your grandson Abhimanyu repulsed them all.

8 Only one warrior
the lovingly brought-up arms-expert Lakṣmaṇa
fearlessly young and proud of his bow-brilliance
succeeded in breaking through to Ārjuni-Abhimanyu.

9 His father Duryodhana
was compelled to return because he was anxious
for Lakṣmaṇa's welfare as were the other mahā-chariot-heroes.

10 These warriors
rained arrows on Abhimanyu like clouds releasing showers
and he singlehanded retaliated and scattered them
like a violent wind dispersing cloud-masses.

11 Pleasing to the eye
your valiant grandson Lakṣmaṇa stood beside
his father Duryodhana
with his bow pulled taut for instant use –

12 To fight a gently brought-up boy
who resembled the son of the god of wealth:
Krishna's nephew Abhimanyu.
They clashed like two musth elephants.

13 Lakṣmaṇa wounded
fearful-foe-crushing Abhimanyu
in his chest and arms with sharp arrows.

14 Mahārāja
your grandson Abhimanyu reacted
with the ferocity of an *uraga*-snake hit with a stick
and to your grandson Lakṣmaṇa, mahārāja,
he said:

15 "Look lovingly your last on this earth
for you will soon leave for the next.
I will send you to Yama's abode
in front of the eyes of your friends and relatives.

16 With these words
mahā-muscled foe-crushing Abhimanyu selected a
*bhalla*-shaft
as clean and smooth as a freshly-sloughed snake.

17 Shot at tremendous speed
the arrow sliced off the handsome head of
Lakṣmaṇa –
an ear-ringed head with attractive nose and
eyebrows and hair.

18 "Hai! Hai!"
rose the wails when Lakṣmaṇa fell
and Duryodhana was filled with uncontrollable
anger.

19 "Kill him!"
shouted bull-brave Kṣatriya Duryodhana to
other Kṣatriyas.
Droṇa, his son Aśvatthāman, Kṛpa, Karṇa,
Bṛhadbala,

20 And Hṛdika's son Kṛtavarman –
these six heroes surrounded Subhadrā's son
but Abhimanyu held them at bay with polised arrows

21 And concentrated fiercely
on attacking the army of the Sindhu-ruler Jayadratha.
Clad in mail and riding on elephants they blocked Abhimanyu –

22 The Kaliṅgas and Niṣādha and Krātha's heroic son.
O lord of the world!
A horrendous battle took place at close quarters.

23 Arjuna's son Abhimanyu
scattered that enormous force of elephants
like an all-directions-blowing storm scattering clouds.

24 Krātha retaliated
by showering Abhimanyu with an arrow-deluge.
Meanwhile chariot-heroes led by Droṇa re-grouped

25 And attacked Saubhadra-Abhimanyu
with a multiplicity of supernatural weapons
which Abhimanyu neutralised and continued to harass Krātha's son.

26 Abhimanyu was determined
to kill Krātha's son and aiming his arrows
at his bow and bracelets and arms and diadem

27 As well as the umbrella
and war-flag and charioteer and horses
he slew Krātha's son.
With the fall of that high-born *śruti*-knowing hero
who was expert in all weapons and world-renowned
the other warriors retreated from the battlefield.

SECTION FORTY-SEVEN

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"When young Saubhadra-Abhimanyu
always victorious and never-retreating
pierced my army's ranks and performed feats
expected from a hero of his lineage

2 And when he sailed
as it were on the field on his three-year old horses
which of my army's heroes tried to repulse him?"

3 Sañjaya replied:
Pāṇḍava-delighting Abhimanyu with his sharp arrows
pierced your ranks and forced your warriors to retreat.

4 Droṇa, Kṛpa, Karṇa, Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman, Bṛhadbala,
And Hṛdika's son Kṛtavarman –
these six chariot-heroes ringed him.

5 Mahārāja!
Noticing the heavy burden placed on the Sindhu king
your soldiers attacked Yudhiṣṭhira.

6 Many mahā-powerful warriors
stretched their bows full four arms'-lengths
and rained arrows on Subhadrā's son.

7 But foe-crushing Saubhadra-Abhimanyu
launched a fierce counter-shower of arrows
on the brilliantly-accomplished mahā-bowmen.

8 With fifty arrows
he wounded Droṇa and Bṛhadbala with twenty
Kṛtavarman with eighty and Kṛpa with sixty.

9 Arjuna's son Abhimanyu
attacked Aśvatthāman with ten mahā-swift gold-winged arrows
shot from a bow pulled up to his ear.

10 From the centre
of the enemy ranks Phālguni-Abhimanyu
pierced Karṇa's ear
with a fine-tipped excellently-sharpened arrow.

11 Killing Kṛpa's horses
and the two defenders of his chariot's flanks
Abhimanyu struck his chest with two arrows.

12 While your sons watched
brave Abhimanyu killed aggressive Vṛndāraka
who was an enhancer of Kaurava glory.

13 While Abhimanyu
was engaged in decimating his greatest enemies
Aśvatthāman attacked him with twentyfive
short arrows.

14 And Abhimanyu retaliated O gracious monarch
by wounding Aśvatthāman
with specially sharpened arrows
fired in front of all the warriors of your army.

15 Sixty sharp and bright arrows
of Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman failed to shake
Abhimanyu
who remained as firm as Maināka mountain.

16 Mahā-energetic Abhimanyu
wounded Aśvatthāman with thirtyseven arrows
all fitted with gold-feathers and shot dead
straight.

17 Eager to save his son
Droṇa harassed Abhimanyu with a hundred
arrows.
Eager to save his father
Aśvatthāman attacked Abhimanyu with sixty
arrows.

18 Karṇa attacked Abhimanyu
with twentytwo broad-headed *bhalla*-arrows
Kṛtavarman attacked him with fourteen
Bṛhadbala with fifty and Śaradvat's son Kṛpa
with ten.

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19 Saubhadra-Abhimanyu retaliated
by harassing each of them with ten arrows
though he was sorely afflicted by their assault.

20 The Kosala-ruler Bṛhadbala
struck Abhimanyu in the chest with a sharp arrow
and Abhimanyu replied by killing his charioteer
and horses
and shredding his bow and war-flag.

21 The unch划ioted Kosala-rājā
gripped his sword and shield firmly and planned
to cut off Phālguni-Abhimanyu's ear-ringed head.

22 But Abhimanyu
struck the Kosala prince's chest with arrows
and Bṛhadbala fell with his breast ripped open.

23 Soon thereafter
ten thousand sword-and- bow-brandishing
mahātmā rājās
were slaughtered by Abhimanyu as they
shouted and cursed.

24 Mahā-bowman Saubhadra-Abhimanyu ruled the field
after killing Bṛhadbala and demoralising with
arrows
all the warriors of your army.

## SECTION FORTY-EIGHT

1 Sañjaya continued:
Phālguni-Abhimanyu attacked chariot-riding
Karṇa with sharp arrows.
and to anger him further fired fifty more arrows.

2 O Bharata! Rādhā's son Karṇa
retaliated with a similar shower of arrows.
Abhimanyu looked resplendent covered with
arrows.

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3 Infuriated Abhimanyu lacerated Karṇa
till blood trickled all over Karṇa's body.
Arrow-pierced and blood-drenched Karṇa
looked as glorious
as a sun-shot saṁdhyā-twilight in autumn.

4 The two mahātmā warriors
sliced with arrow-wounds and drenched in blood
looked like two flowering flames-of-the-forest.

5 Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu
killed six war-skilled ministers of Karṇa
along with their charioteers and horses
and demolished their chariots and flags.

6 Coolly Abhimanyu
pinned down the mahā-bowmen with ten
arrows each.
It was truly a wonderful feat!

7 After killing
the Magadha-ruler with six swift arrows
Abhimanyu knocked down Aśvaketu and his
charioteer and horses.

8 Next he killed
with a horse-shoe arrow Bhoja of Mārtikāvataka
whose war-flag had the emblem of an elephant
and then he screamed his fierce war-cry.

9 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
wounded his four horses with four arrows
his charioteer with one and Abhimanyu with ten.

10 Krishna's nephew Kārṣṇi-Abhimanyu
attacked Duḥśāsana's son with ten swift arrows
and his eyes flaming shouted across the field:

11 "Your father was a coward.
He fled in fear. It is good you know how to fight.
But you will not escape me alive today."

12 Saying these words
Arjuna's son Abhimanyu fired a *nārāca*-arrow
which Aśvatthāman splintered in mid-air with
three arrows.

13 Abhimanyu shredded
Aśvatthāman's flag and fired across at Śalya
who calmly fitted nine vulture-feathered arrows

14 And wounded Abhimanyu.
O rājā! A wonderful feat!
Abhimanyu shredded Śalya's flag
and killed both defenders of his chariot's flanks

15 And wounded him with six iron-arrows.
Śalya climbed into another chariot.
Satruṁjay and Candraketu and Meghavega
and Suvarcas

16 As well as Suryabhasa –
after killing these five Abhimanyu attacked Śakuni
who retaliated with three arrows and shouted to
Duryodhana:

17 "Let us together
attack and kill him before he kills us one by one."
Vaikartana-Karṇa asked Droṇa:

18 "How can we kill him
before he kills us all. Tell us!"
The mahā bow-expert Droṇa advised them:

19 "Have you noticed
any weakness in this young hero so far?
See if you can as he careens across the field.

20 Observe the speed
of this Pāṇḍava lion-among-men:
as he rides his chariot only the full
maṇdala-circle of his bow can be seen –

21 Not his arrows –
for they are shot so swiftly from his bow.
Though he stupefies me with his arrows

22 I am delighted.
Though Subhadrā's son afflicts me repeatedly
I am overjoyed seeing him criss-cross the field.

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23 The mahā-chariot-heroes
are furious because they can spot no weakness in him.
His dexterity obscures the sky with arrows.

24 I see no difference
between him and Gāṇḍīva-wielding Arjuna."
Harassed by Abhimanyu's arrows Karṇa again asked Droṇa:

25 "I stand here only
because it is a warrior's duty to stand firm.
The fierce arrows of this young hero

26 Burn me like fire
as they pierce my chest and vital organs."
Ācārya Droṇa smiled and said gently to Karṇa:

27 "Abhimanyu is a young hero
of remarkable prowess with impenetrable armour.
I taught his father how to put on mail.

28 This pulversier of enemy cities
surely knows all the secrets of mail-wearing
but well-shot arrows can slice his bow and bow-string

29 And shred his veins
and destroy the two defenders of his chariot's flanks.
Son of Rādhā, mahā-bowman, do this if you can.

30 Hit him from behind
after somehow making him turn his back.
So long as he faces you with his bow
neither gods nor anti-gods can defeat him.

31 If you can
you must deprive him somehow of his chariot and his bow."
Acting on the ācārya's advice Vaikartana-Karṇa

32 Speedily sliced
Abhimanyu's bow even as he kept firing arrows.
Kṛtavarman of the Bhojas killed his horses
and Kṛpa killed the two flank-defenders.

33 The other warriors
deluged bow-less Abhimanyu with arrows
Six mahā-chariot-heroes with grim determination

34 Ruthlessly showered
the bow-less young hero with sharp arrows.
The unchariotted and bow-less hero
remembered his sva-dharma

35 And grasping his bow and shield
Śrīmān Abhimanyu seemed to leap as if into the sky.
Displaying remarkable skill and dexterity

36 Arjuna's son Abhimanyu
appeared like the rājā-of-birds Garuḍa.
"He's pouncing sword in hand on me" –

37 So thinking
the mahā-bowmen looked up and aimed at Abhimanyu.
Enemy-annihilating Droṇa sliced his jewel-hilted sword

38 With a single arrow
shaped like a horse-shoe
while Rādheya-Karṇa shredded his shield with sharp arrows.

39 Sword-less and shield-less
Abhimanyu leapt down and lifting a chariot-wheel
he rushed in a frenzy towards Droṇa.

40 His body was glowing
with the dust of the wheel
raised high on his arm.
He looked like handsome
Vāsudeva-Krishna
as he fought his foes.

41 His dress was drenched
with the blood from his wounds,
and fearful wrinkles
creased his forehead;
he shouted his lion-cries
as he struggled against
the circle of kings.
Valiant Abhimanyu
looked amazingly handsome.

## SECTION FORTY-NINE

1 Sañjaya said:
The chariot-hero delighter of Krishna's sister
Subhadrā
looked as radiant as Viṣṇu-Krishna himself
as he brandished his people-pulverising weapons
like the weapons of Janārdana-Krishna

2 His weapons raised high
his locks waving in the wind –
a sight to terrify the gods themselves!
When the earth-rulers saw him

3 And the uplifted wheel
they were filled with dread but quickly
they splintered the wheel with a volley of arrows.
Immediately Abhimanyu picked up a huge mace.

4 Deprived his chariot
and his bow and sword and chariot-wheel
Abhimanyu charged mace in hand at
Aśvatthāman.

5 Seeing that uplifted mace
refulgent like a fierce bolt of lightning
bull-brave Aśvatthāman leapt three steps away.

6 Smashing with his mace the horses
and two flank-defenders of Aśvatthāman
Saubhadra-Abhimanyu paused. His arrow-
riddled body looked like a procupine.

7 He battered to death
Subala's son Kālikeya and killed seventyseven
Gāndhāra followers of Kālikeya.

8 He slew ten chariot-heroes
of the Vasātīyas and seven of the Kekayas
along with ten huge elephants.

9 O gracious monarch! He pinned down
the chariot and horses of Duḥśāsana's son
who lifted his mace and wild with anger

10 Attacked Saubhadra-Abhimanyu
shouting "Wait! Wait!" as he ran.
The two battling-to-death heroes with maces uplifted –

11 The two cousin-brothers –
thudded at each other like three-eyed Trayambaka-Śiva
and the antigod Andhaka battling in the distant past.
Battered by maces they hit the ground

12 Like two flag-poles
raised in honour of Indra that topple and fall.
The Kuru-glory-enhancing son of Duḥśāsana recovered first,

13 And brought his mace down
on Abhimanyu's head as he struggled to rise.
Stunned by the violent impact of that blow,

14 The fatigued foe-crusher Saubhadra-Abhimanyu
crumpled senseless on the field of battle.
O rājā! That is how they ganged up and killed him

15 Who crushed the Kauravas
like an elephant trampling lotuses in a lake.
They killed like hunters slaughtering a wild elephant.
He radiated glory as he fell.

16 Your warriors surrounded
Abhimanyu as he lay on the field
like an extinguished fire
that has ravaged a forest in summer

17 Like a fierce storm that has abated
after shattering tree-tops
Like the sun setting
after scorching the Bharata army

18 Like the moon eclipsed
Like the ocean sucked dry.
His face was bright as the full moon
his long crow's-wing locks covered his eyes –

19 He lay on the ground
and your mahā-chariot-heroes saw him
and burst into ecstatic lion-like cries.

20 O lord of the world
your soldiers were filled with delight
and tears filled the eyes of the Pāṇḍava heroes.

21 Seeing the young hero
asprawl on the ground like a fallen moon
all the king and others condemned the deed:

22 "This is not dharma:
six mahā-chariot-heroes of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
led by Droṇa and Karṇa
slaughter a lone hero!"

23 With Abhimanyu lying dead on her
the earth looked as glorious as the starry sky
spangled with the beauty of the full moon.

24 The earth was littered
with gold-winged arrows and flooded with blood
and covered with the ear-ringed heads of heroes

25 And everywhere
were costly and glittering turbans
and pennants and feather-fans
and gorgeous blankets and gem-crusted weapons

26 And scintillating ornaments
of chariots and horses
and men and elephants
and they glistened like sloughed-off snakes

27 And broken bows and arrows
with darts and scimitars
and *śakti*-missiles and *kampanas*
and innumerable other weapons.
A dazzling spectacle!

28 The field was filled
with blood-splashed bodies of dead and dying
horses and their riders all toppled by
Saubhadra-Abhimanyu.

29 With iron goads
and hill-huge elephants
with shields and weapons
and arrow-splintered flag-poles

30 With horseless chariots
and writhing charioteers
and soldiers trampled by elephants
and lake-like pools of blood

31 With corpses of soldiers
still clutching their weapons –
the earth presented a gruesome sight
certain to terrify the cowardly.

32 Seeing Abhimanyu
who resembled the sun or the moon in radiance
dead
your soldiers exulted and the Pāṇḍavas lamented.

33 With young Abhimanyu dead
all the Pāṇḍava warriors fled from the field
in front of the eyes of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

34 Seeing his army fleeing
after Abhimanyu's death
Yudhiṣṭhira said to his illustrious soldiers:

35 "Saubhadrā's brave son
who died without turning his back
has gone to heaven.
Do not fear. We will still crush our enemies."

36 Mahā-energetic and mahā-refulgent
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira was beside himself in despair
but he tried to console his troops by saying:

37 "Ārjuni-Abhimanyu is dead
but not before he himself despatched
his snake-like enemies to their doom.

38 After killing
ten thousand chariot-heroes of the Kauravas
and the mahā-chariot-hero Kosala ruler Bṛhadbala
Kārṣṇi-Abhimanyu who was the equal of Krishna
or Arjuna has gone to the eternal realm of Śakra-Indra.

39 He killed chariot-heroes
and soldiers and elephants and horses in thousands
but remained dissatisfied with his achievement.
Instead of mourning this performer of meritorious deeds
let us remember that he has achieved the eternal realm
that can only be achieved by pious deeds."

## SECTION FIFTY

1 Sañjaya continued:
After killing their finest warrior with our arrows
we returned to our camp
our bodies bloodied with arrow-wounds.

2 Mahārāja
exhausted we returned under their watchful eyes
as they mourned their grievous loss.

3 An awesome hour,
the meeting of day
and night in twilight,
with the inauspicious
howling of jackals,
and the sun sinking
slowly in the west
like a soft-gold
lotus-flower crown.

4 He stole the shine
of our *śaktis* and lances,
our shields and scimitars,
our chariots and ornaments,
he made sky and earth one.
and sank into fire.

5 The earth was a litter
of motionless corpses
of elephants like hills
torn apart by lightning,
with their flags and mahouts
scattered around them.

6 An incredible sight!
Huge chariots smashed,
charioteers and warriors
and horses and war-flags
disintegrated and dead;
the chariots lying
on the field like creatures
deprived of their life-breaths
by enemy arrows.

7 A gruesome spectacle!
Horses and riders
lying dead on the field,
with trappings and blankets
strewn in abandon;
and intestines and tongues
and teeth and eyes
protruding awry
in hideous poses.

8 And soldiers with glittering
armour and ornaments
and dresses and weapons
lay sprawled on the field
in the company of horses
and elephants and chariots,
exposed and helpless
though deserving the finest
blankets and beds.

9 And jackals and dogs
and crows and wolves
and hyenas and flesh-
eating birds and blood-
drinking beasts and rākṣasas
and tribes of Piśācas
roamed over the field
and feasted their fill
in ecstatic delight.

10 They tore open corpses
and gulped down the marrow
and munched at the flesh;
they lapped the excreta
and cackled and dragged away
thousands of bodies.

11 The blood of the dead
– its waters
The chariots to cross it
– its rafts
The elephants that blocked it
– its boulders
The decapitated heads of warriors
– its mud and slush
The scattered weapons of war
– its garlands

12 There flowed on the field
the Vaitaraṇī river
A fearful river
created by the dead warriors
A river that flowed
in the middle of the field
Transporting the living
to the land of the dead.

13 Horrendous and ugly
Piśācas rejoiced
as they ate and drank
in that grisly river
with jackals and dogs
in a fearful feast.

14 The coming of night
saw an eerie dance
by the headless bodies
of the massacred warriors
on the field that added
to Death's population,
augmenting the realm
of the spirits of one's fathers
and lords and ancestors,
and the flesh-eating creatures
witnessed the dance
and shuffled and left.

15 And after they left,
one could see the Śakra-
Indra-like corpse
of mahā-powerful Abhimanyu
with his ornaments smashed
and slipped from his body –
like a sacrificial fire
that fades when no sacred
oblations are fed.

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## SECTION FIFTY-ONE

1 Sañjaya continued:
When the chariot-division leader Abhimanyu was killed
the Pāṇḍavas abandoned their chariots and armour and bows

2 And sat in a circle
around rājā Yudhiṣṭhira locked in their sorrow
over the death of Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu.

3 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
gave himself up to uncontrollable grief
when he heard of the death of his brother's mahā-chariot-hero son.

4 Yudhiṣṭhira said:
"After humbling the mahā-charioi-heroes Kṛpa and Śalya
as well as rājā Suyodhana-Duryodhana and Droṇa and Aśvatthāman

5 Purely to please me
and after piercing Droṇa's impenetrable battle-array
and smashing the main force of their army

6 My child Abhimanyu
who is learned and modest and skilled in warfare
who possesses all the virtues and is world-renowned

7 Who even the gods
have difficulty in challenging let alone defeating—
that remarkable youth penetrated Droṇa's array

8 (A feat natural to him
for he is *cakra*-wielding Krishna's dear nephew)
as easily as a lion enters a herd of cows.

9 What magnificent feats
were displayed by him on the field of battle!
The enemy bowmen who clashed with him
soon felt the impact of his invincible war-skills
and were forced to retreat ignominiously.

10 Our bitter enemy Duḥśāsana
fought with him and and had to flee the field
after being reduced to semi-consciousness by
his arrows.

11 After Kārṣṇi-Abhimanyu had crossed
the massive ocean of Droṇa's army-formation
he was sent to Vaivasvata-Yama's realm by
Duḥśāsana's son.

12 Abhimanyu is dead.
How will I be able to face Kuntī's son Arjuna?
How will I face mahā-fortune-favoured Subhadrā
never able to see her beloved son again?

13 How will we face
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna and Hṛṣikeśa-Krishna today?
What useless and incoherent words will we say?

14 The fault is all mine!
I sought my own good and my own victory
and I have harmed Subhadrā and Arjuna and
Keśava-Krishna!

15 It is not possible
for a possessive man to see his own weakness
for the root of possessiveness is folly.
In my eagerness to lick honey
I failed to foresee the fall from the tree.

16 He was only a boy.
We should have given him delicious food.
We should have given him soft beds and
ornaments.
Instead we sent him to the thick of the battle.

17 How could he cope
with the fearful peril we placed him in?
He was only a little boy.
He was like a restive foal chafing in harness.

18 What will happen now?
Arjuna will show his wrath-filled grief
and we will burn in the shame of our deed.

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19 Arjuna is
unselfish
intelligent
modest
patient
handsome
strong
respectful
heroic
firm in truth.

20 The gods praise his prowess
He killed the Nivātakavacas
He killed the Kālakeyas

21 In the flash of an eye
he killed the inhabitants of the golden city
the Pulomas and their followers who hated
Mahendra-Indra.

22 He is the powerful one
who assures protection to those who approach
him.
And we through fear have not been able to
protect his son.

23 A fatal mahā-fear
must now be gripping the army of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
for Pārtha-Arjuna in his anger will now slaughter
them all.

24 Devious Duryodhana
and his crooked counsellors will see their army
slaughtered
and will take their own lives in grief.

25 When I see Abhimanyu,
son of Indra's son,
dead on the battlefield,
neither victory nor kingdom,
neither god-rank nor immortality,
gives me any pleasure."

## SECTION FIFTY-TWO

1 Sañjaya continued:
While Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira was deep in grief
mahā-ṛṣi "Born-on-an-Island" Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana-Vyāsa came to him.

2 Yudhiṣṭhira revered him
and sat down with his mind still sorrowing
over Abhimanyu's death and said to him:

3 "Abhimanyu is dead.
He has been killed by mahā-chariot-heroes and mahā-bowmen
who surrounded him and used adharma tactics.

4 Subhadrā's son
was a great fighter of enemies but an inexperienced boy
who was forced to battle against impossible odds.

5 It is true
I ordered him to carve out a path for us
which he did but we were blocked by Saindhava Jayadratha.

6 Professional warriors
such as Kṣatriyas should at least fight fairly
but Abhimanyu was the victim of unfair means.

7 This is what hurts me.
I burn with grief. My eyes are filled with tears.
I brood over this and I cannot find peace."

8 Bhagavān Vyāsa (continued Sañjaya)
turned to Yudhiṣṭhira who was drowning in grief
and said to him:

9 "Supremely wise bull-brave Bharata Yudhiṣṭhira!
You who are learned in all the śāstras!
Vicissitude never perturbs men of your calibre.

10 Abhimanyu is a hero.
He is a *puruṣottama.* This finest of men has killed his enemies
and performed adult feats and is now in heaven.

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11 Yudhiṣṭhira should know
that this is a law that none can evade.
O Bharata! Death will take away gods and
Dānavas and Gandharvas."

12 Yudhiṣṭhira said:
"All these mahā-powerful earth-rulers are lying
on the field
without life-breaths. They are what we call 'dead'.

13 Some were strong
with the strength of ten thousand elephants.
Some had the vitality and force of a storm.
Human beings have killed them and made all
equal.

14 I could not imagine
a human being alive with power to kill them
for they were accomplished and brave and strong.

15 They are all dead –
all those who had dreamt of conquering each
other –
all deprived of life-breaths despite their wisdom.

16 Today I have realised
the full meaning of the word 'Death'
by seeing all these earth-lords lying dead.

17 Killed by their enemies
they lie still on the field with all their pride gone.
Many righteously angry princes have been
devoured in the fire of Vaiśvānara-Death.

18 I am filled with doubts.
What is Death? Who is Death? How does
Death come?
Why does Death take away living beings?

19 Respected Pitāmaha!
You are like a god. Explain this to me."
Bhagavan-ṛṣi Vyāsa (continued Sañjaya)
said these consoling words to Kuntī's son
Yudhiṣṭhira
who was questioning him so closely:

20 King!
There is an ancient historical story dealing with this –
a story that Nārada narrated to king Akampana.

21 Rājā Akampana
was crushed by the news of his son's death
which in my opinion is the most difficult sorrow to bear.

22 Let me tell you
the remarkable story of the birth of Death
listening to which will remove your sentimental sorrow.

23 Listen to me carefully
as I repeat this very ancient and excellent story
which kills sorrow and bestows health and long life.

24 It is a holy story
that will vanquish your worst enemies
for it is the most auspicious of all that is auspicious.
It equals the study and chanting of the Vedas.

25 Mahārāja!
All excellent kings who desire long-lived sons and wealth and power
should listen to it diligently every morning.

26 Long ago in the Kṛta-yuga
lived a rājā called Akampana.
Once he was trapped on the battlefield by his enemies.

27 He had a son Hari
who equalled Nārāyaṇa himself in strength –
a handsome and intelligent and accomplished warrior
whose prowess in battle was the equal of Śakra-Indra's.

28 Hemmed in by his enemies
Hari shot thousands of arrows at the waves
of enemy warriors and elephants charging at him.

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29 It did not help him, Yudhiṣṭhira.
Though he displayed the most remarkable feats
he was killed on the battlefield by his enemies.

30 Rājā Akampana
performed the funeral rites and gave in to grief.
Day and night he could find no peace of mind.

31 Learning of the grief
that had overtaken Akampana after his son's death
the celestial ṛṣi Nārada came to him.

32 The mahā-fortune-favoured rājā
saw Nārada approaching and offered him pūjā-respect
after which he spoke to Nārada

33 Giving the holy man
all the details of what had happened –
his defeat by his foes and the killing of his son:

34 "My mahā-valiant son
whose radiance equalled that of Viṣṇu or Indra
has been killed by his enemies on the battlefield.

35 Revered one! *Bhagavan*!
What is Death? What is his valour?
His strength? His manliness?
I want to know the real truth behind all this."

36 Boon-bestowing Nārada
listened to Akampana's questions and told this
a story which destroys the maha-grief
caused by the death of a son.

37 O lord of the earth!
I will narrate this story to you exactly
as I heard it myself. Listen to it carefully.

38 In the beginning
Mahā-energy-radiant Pitāmaha Brahmā
created the worlds' creatures.
Seeing that no creatures decayed or deteriorated

39 Brahmā meditated
on how best to introduce destruction in the world.
Profound thinking failed to produce any useful idea.

40 Mahārāja!
From Brahmā's fierce frustration rose a fire
that spread in all directions and licked the universe.

41 Tongues of flame
spread over the sky and the earth.
Prabhu Bhagavān consumed the entire universe
with all its moving and unmoving life.

42 Animate and unanimate –
all life was wiped out by the frightening fire
of all-powerful Brahmā's maha-ferocious anger.

43 Matted-haired Hara-Śiva
lord of the rākṣasas
also called Sthāṇu
sought shelter from the world-lord Prameṣṭhin-Brahmā.

44 Propitiated by Sthāṇu
who desired the welfare of the world's creatures
the radiant mahā-muni and primal deity
Brahmā said:

45 "What do you desire?
You who were born from my own mind
deserve to have all your wishes granted.
Whatever is dear to you will be done.
Speak, Sthāṇu!"

## SECTION FIFTY-THREE

1 Sthāṇu-Śiva said: "Radiant Lord! *Vibho*!
You created the worlds' living beings with care,
you look after the welfare of your multitudinous creation.

2 Yet your wrath
is now consuming your creation to ashes.
I see it and I feel compassion.
*Bhagavan Prabhu!* Be merciful to them."

3 Brahmā replied:
"It was never my intention to destroy the worlds.
My intention was the welfare of the worlds.
My anger proceeded from this intention.

4 Mahādeva!
Burdened by the weight of creatures
the pure earth-devī begged me to destroy them.

5 I thought and thought
but failed to find a way of destroying
this infinite creation. Frustrated anger impelled me."

6 Rudra-Śiva said:
"Lord of the earth!
Curb your anger! Be merciful!
Refrain from destroying the worlds.
Refrain from destroying all moving and unmoving life.

7 *Bhagavan!*
It is your grace that divides the universe
into Past and Present and Future.

8 *Bhagavan*! Revered one!
You have burst into frustrated anger
Your frustrated anger has burst into fire
This fire now consumes trees and rocks and rivers.

9 It consumes
grasses and creepers
It devours
all moving and unmoving life.

10 *Bhagavan!* Revered one!
All moving and unmoving creatures
are being reduced to ashes
Be merciful!
No more!
Grant me this boon.

11 Deva! O divine one!
All that you created
is disappearing in one way or other.
Pull back your energy.
Absorb it within yourself.

12 Deva!
This is your own creation!
Look to the welfare of your own creation.
Let these breathing creatures live.

13 O Ādi-deva! O Primal Divinity!
The world you have created
will be depopulated if all creatures are killed.
You have made me the protector of the universe.

14 So I beg of you
not to exterminate all moving and unmoving life.
Lord of the universe! Jagannātha!
You are always merciful.
So I make this request."

15 Narāda continued:
These words of Śiva made world-welfare-wishing Brahmā
withdraw his passionate energy within himself.

16 The fire extinguished
and the supreme well-wisher of the universe Bhagavān
preached the doctrine of Work and Withdrawal.

17 Mahātmā Brahmā
quenched the flames of his frustrated anger
and from the openings and tips of his sense-organs
emerged a lady –

18 A red and black lady!
A lady with red face
red tongue and red eyes
O Indra-among-rājās!
A lady with ear-rings of molten gold
and molten-gold ornaments.

19 She emerged from his senses
she stood in the south
she looked at the two lords of the universe
and she smiled.

20 O ruler of the earth! Mahīpāla!
Lord Brahmā
controller of the creation and destruction of the world
addressed her gently and sweetly again and again as "Death"
and said to her:
"Destroy all creatures.

21 You are the manifestation
of the anger I had for the worlds' destruction.
Destroy all creatures whether fool or paṇḍit

22 On my behalf.
So you will prosper."
The lotus-eyed lady called Death listened

23 And meditated deeply.
Then she burst into a flood of tears.
Pitāmaha Brahmā
for the welfare of the worlds
caught her tears in his cupped palms
and consoled her.

## SECTION FIFTY-FOUR

1 Nārada continued:
Suppressing her grief the helpless lady Death
folded her palms in *añjali* and bending like a creeper
said to Prajāpati-Brahmā:

2 "Finest of eloquent speakers!
You created me a woman.
How can I knowingly do such a cruel deed?

3 *Bhagavan! Prabhu* Lord!
I fear adharma.
Grant me your grace
Sons, friends, brothers, mothers, fathers, husbands –
All are dear to me.

4 If I destroy them
will they not revenge themselves on me?
This is what I fear.
The tears that fall from the eyes of the grief-stricken

5 Fill me with fear. O Deva! O lord of the gods!
Protect me, *Bhagavan*! O revered one!
Do not send me to the abode of Yama.

6 O Loka-pitāmaha! Grancestor of the cosmos!
I bow my head
I fold my hands
I beg of you –
Grant me this only wish.

7 Lord of creation! Prajeśvara!
Grant me your grace
to practise tapasyā.
*Prabhu* Lord *Bhagavan*! Deva!
This is all I ask.

8 With your permission
I shall go to the excellent āshram of Dhenuka
and devote myself to tapasyā
and offer you worship.

9 Lord of the gods! Deveśa!
It is not possible for me
to destroy the lives of weeping creatures.
Spare me from such adharma!"

10 Brahmā replied:
"You are Death. You were created to destroy.
Go! Destroy all creatures.
Remove all scruples from your mind.

11 This will happen.
It is inevitable.
Carry out my word.
No one will blame you."

12 Nārada continued:
She faced *Bhagavan* Brahmā in an *añjali* posture.
In her heart she was pleased
but she determined not to destroy any creatures
for she was eager for their welfare.

13 The Lord of the gods
was also silent for a while.
The Lord of creatures seemed pleased with himself.

14 He looked at the worlds –
the Lord of the gods looked at the worlds and smiled.
And the worlds continued happily as before.

15 With the disappearance
of the anger of invincible Brahmā
the lady departed from the presence
of that supremely intelligent Being.

16 O Indra-among-rājās!
Death departed without promising
to destroy the world's creatures
and hurried to the āshram of Dhenuka.

17 There she observed
a supremely strict and excellent vow.
She stood on one leg for sixteen *padma*-years,

18 And five more *padma*-years
because she was moved by compassion for the world's good.
She withdrew her senses from all pleasant objects.

19 O Lord of the earth!
She continued standing on one leg
for another twentyone *padma*-years.

20 For ten thousand *padma*-years
she mixed and roamed with the animals.
She came to the cool and sacred waters of the Nandā

21 And spent eight thousand years
practising tapasyā on the banks of the Nandā
and so purified herself of all defects.

22 Continuing her vows
she visited the sacred Kauśikī river
and performed penance there by living on air and water.

23 Proceeding from there
to the Pañcagaṅgā and the forest of Vetasa
that pure lady emaciated herself by additional tapasyā.

24 From there she went
to the Gaṅgā and the mahā-Meru mountain
where she controlled her life-breaths
in Prāṇāyāma becoming as it were a figure of stone.

25 From there
the pious lady went to the peak of the Himālaya
where in the past the gods performed *yajñas*
and she stood on her toe for a billion years.

26 She proceeded next
to Puṣkara and Gokarṇa and Naimiṣa and Malaya
and emaciated her wan body still further.

27 No other god
was her object of worship except Pitāmaha Brahmā
to whom she gave her bhakti with total dharma.

28 O rājā! The undecaying Lord of the worlds
was moved by her complete dedication
and said to her gently and joyfully:

29 "Death!
What is it that moves you to such intense tapasyā?"
Death replied to *Bhagavan* Pitāmaha:

30 "Lord God of all! Sarveśa Deva!
I cannot destroy living creatures.
Grant me the boon not to harm
inoffensive creatures enjoying their health.

31 I fear adharma.
I am engaged in tapasyā.
*Prabhu* Lord!
Have pity on this helpless and frightened devotee,

32 Grant me refuge.
I am only a timid and innocent woman."
Past-present-and-future-knowing Brahmā said:

33 "No adharma attaches to you
if you destroy the worlds' creatures.
O gracious lady! What I say can never be untrue.

34 Favoured one!
Destroy the four kinds of life.
Eternal Dharma is on your side.

35 The Lokapāla World-Protectors
and Yama and various Maladies will assist you.
I and the gods will grant you boons.

36 You will be purified
and you will radiate in great glory."
Mahārāja! She folded her palms in *añjali*

37 And with bent head
she said these pleasing words to Brahmā:
"*Prabhu* Lord! If this task cannot be done
without me

38 Then I accept
your request to perform it.
But on one condition. Please listen carefully.
Greed
Anger
Hatred
Malice
Dissension
Folly
Shamelessness

39 And Bitter Speech –
make these passions tear human bodies apart."
Brahmā replied:
"So it will be, Death. Proceed with your
destruction.
No adharma will attach to you, auspicious lady.
You will not be harmed.

40 The tears you have shed
that are cupped in my hands
will be changed to diseases
that spring from within
the bodies of creatures
and act as destroyers.
As for you, do not fear:
you are free from adharma.
This is my word.

41 You are free from adharma.
You are the lady of dharma,
you are the dharma of creatures.
Devoted to dharma,
in accordance with dharma,
you will rule all creatures.

42 Cast aside anger
and kāma, and remove
the worlds' creatures.
So doing, cherish dharma.
The wicked will perish
in their own adharma.

43 Fulfil my command
and be purified.
The wicked will perish
by their own misdeeds.
Forsake anger and kāma
and remove all creatures."

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44 Repeatedly addressed
by the title of "Death"
and afraid of the curse
of Brahmā, she said:
"So be it." Controlling
her anger and kāma,
she started removing
the lives of creatures
when their last hour came.

45 This then is Death.
This is Disease.
This the condition
of human suffering.
Death and Disease
are natural. Be calm.

46 When creatures die,
their senses proceed
with them where they go,
and return on re-birth.
The gods die also,
O lion-brave rājā!

47 A roaring and mahā-powerful Wind!
An everywhere-flowing Wind!
A cosmic and cacophonous Wind!
A Wind tearing open bodies!
A never-ceasing Wind!

48 The gods too are mortal.
O lion-among rājās,
do not grieve for your son.
He is happy in heaven,
enjoying the company
of excellent heroes.

49 His sorrows are over,
he lives with the virtuous.
All creatures must die.
When their time is ripe,
they are taken away.
To be born is to die.

50 Creatures destroy themselves.
Though Death wields a rod,
Death does not destroy.
Death is inescapable,
it is willed by Brahmā,
so the wise do not grieve.
Now that you know
what it is, discard
your grief for your son."

51 Dvaipāyana-Vyāsa continued:
Hearing these profound words of Nārada
Rājā Akampana turned to his *sakhā*-friend
Nārada and said:

52 "Finest among ṛṣis! *Bhagavan*!
My calm of mind is restored and I am pleased
after hearing your story. I am grateful."

53 Finest-of-ṛṣis deva-ṛṣi Nārada –
a divine ṛṣi with a serene ātman – heard the rājā
and happily and quickly returned
to Nandana forest.

54 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira!
After hearing this profound story you should
discard your sorrow.
You know Kṣatriya dharma.
You know where heroes go after they die.

55 The mahā-chariot-hero Abhimanyu
has attained heaven after defeating his enemies
in the presence of all those brilliant bowmen.

56 That maha-chariot-hero
died on the battlefield while fighting.
He was killed by bows and maces and swords.
He was the son of the moon in an earlier birth
and he has attained the lunar realm now.

57 Son of Paṇḍu!
Summon your courage and march
with your brothers to the field of battle
Do not fall victim to listlessness.

## SECTION FIFTY-FIVE

1 Sañjaya continued:
After listening to the story of Death and her amazing mission
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira pleased Vyāsa by saying:

2 "Noble Brāhmin!
Many truth-speaking rāja-ṛṣis as powerful as Śakra-Inda
have lived in many lands and done pious deeds.

3 Tell me the story
of these rāja-ṛṣis and comfort me
with an account of their praiseworthy feats.

4 What *dakṣiṇā*-gifts
did they make and which mahātmā kings were donors?
Tell me all about these pure-minded rāja-ṛṣis."

5 Vyāsa replied:
In the distant past lived a king named Śaibya
whose son was Sṛñjaya who had two ṛṣis as friends.

6 Wanting to meet him
the ṛṣis one day turned up at his palace.
He offered them homage and they stayed there happily.

7 It happened one day
that Sṛñjaya was relaxing with the ṛṣis
when his sweet-smiling lovely daughter entered.

8 She honoured her father
and he gave her his blessings
as she stood gracefully by his side.

9 Seeing the girl
Parvata smiled and said to Sṛñjaya:
"This auspicious-marked and restless-eyed girl –
whose daughter is she?

10 Aho!
Is she the radiance of the Sun itself
or is she a segment of Fire?
Is she Śrī or Hrī? Kīrti or Dhṛti?
Puṣṭi? Siddhi? or the splendour of the Moon?"

11 King Sṛñjaya
replied to the divine ṛṣi who had asked him:
*"Bhagavan!*
She is my daughter who has come for my blessing."

12 Narada said to the king:
"If you are eager to obtain great good fortune
give your daughter to me in marriage."

13 Delighted beyond words
Sṛñjaya turned to Nārada and said, "Gladly."
But Parvata was upset and said to Nārada:

14 "You have accepted
as wife a girl whom I in my heart chose first.
Therefore you cannot enter heaven whenever
you please."

15 Nārada explained:
"The husband's heart
His promise
The bestower's consent
Their mutual agreement
The actual bestowal made with sprinkling of
water

16 The mantras chanted
while holding the bride's hands –
these are required before one becomes a husband.
Even these are inadequate. It's the *sapta-padi*
It's the seven steps together that makes a marriage.

17 You have cursed me
for no reason whatsoever.
You cannot go to heaven without me."

18 Having cursed each other
the two ṛṣis continued to stay there.
In the meantime Sṛñjaya robed and feasted them

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19 Because he was eager
to obtain a son with all the means at his command.
One day wishing to grant him a son the pleased Brahmins

20 Who practised tapasyā
and were learned in the Vedas and their branches
together approached Nārada and said:
"Grant the king the son he wants."

21 Nārada said to the Brahmins:
"It will be done." Then to Sṛñjaya: "Rāja-ṛṣi!
The Brahmins are pleased and wish to grant
you a son."

22 May good fortune be yours!
Ask for a boon to give you the son you desire."
The rājā did *añjali* and asked for a son

23 With all the talents
of character and fame and energy and
invincible courage –
whose urine and dung and spit and sweat would be gold.

24 He said to Nārada:
"So let it be by the goodness of your grace."
Nārada replied:
"It will be so." So the king had a son

25 Of radiant looks
fashioned for the planned golden purposes.
When he cried his tears were golden.

26 This was the reason
the king named his son Suvarṇaṣṭhīvi –
a son who enhanced the royal treasury hugely.

27 The king ordered
every object in the kingdom to be made of gold:
houses and walls and forts and Brahmins' homes.

28 Beds and couches
and plates and cups and saucers and other utensils –
anything in the palace whether domestic or public –

29 Had to be golden.
The golden artifacts went on increasing.
Robbers heard of and saw the wealth of the king,

30 And devised ways
of looting the golden possessions.
Some robbers said: "Let's seize the king's son,

31 He is the gold-mine.
Let's get him in our hands."
Driven by greed they slipped inside the palace

32 And succeeded
in kidnapping the king's son Suvarṇaṣṭhīvi
to a forest but the unscrupulous fools

33 Chopped him to pieces
and found no gold inside his body.
With his death all the vow-made gold vanished.

34 Stupidly and wickedly
the robbers then attacked and killed each other.
With that marvellous prince's death they died too.

35 The horrendous robbers
straightaway went to the worst of hells.
Seeing his mahā-tapasyā-born son dead,

36 King Sṛñjaya
was distraught with grief and began lamenting.
Hearing the intense grief of the bereaved king,

37 The deva-ṛṣi Nārada
appeared before sorrowing Sṛñjaya
and said these words to the woe-numbed monarch –

38 Words which you, Yudhiṣṭhira,
should also listen to carefully. Nārada said:
"Cast off grief, mahārāja!
cast off this weakness, O lord of men!
There is no sorrow and no numbing loss so deep
that can bring back your son.

39 So cast off this folly!
A great king like you should not break down.
Mahārāja!
Get a grip on yourself!
I admire your patience and wisdom.

40 O Sṛñjaya!
You too will die with many desires unfulfilled
though we Veda-reciters live under your roof.
O Sṛñjaya!
We hear even Avikṣita's son Marutta died.

41 Envious of Bṛhaspati
he compelled his brother Saṁvarta to assist him
when he began his propitiatory sacrifice.
Bhagavān Śiva offered to that rāja-ṛṣi

42 A peak of Himavant
and Marutta performed additional sacrifices.
The gods along with Indra and headed by
Bṛhaspati

43 Together with the world-creators
would come to him – and it is said
his *yajña* carpets and materials were all golden.

44 At his *yajñas*
only the finest and tastiest purified food
was served to the twice-born who ate all they
pleased.

45 At his sacrifices
sweet-milk and ghee and honey and other edibles
were offred together with dresses and ornaments

46 To the assembled Brahmins
who were all learned in the essence of the Vedas.
In Marutta's palace the gods personally
distributed gifts.

47 The courtiers
of Avikṣita's son Marutta were the world-deities.
He honoured the gods wth oblations of ghee

48 And the gratified gods
sent copious rain and abundant harvests.
He pleased the ṛṣis and *pitṛs* and the gods

49 By practising brahmacarya
and by studying the Vedas and offering gifts.
His beds and carpets and treasury of gold –
so large that it was difficult even to give away –

50 All of that wealth
was freely distributed by him to the Brahmins.
Śakra-Indra blessed him. His subjects were happy with him.

51 With these holy deeds
he attained the undecaying realms achieved by the pure-hearted.
With his wives and children and relatives and courtiers,

52 Young king Marutta
governed his kingdom for a thousand years.
If such a king who excelled in the four virtues
of dharma and intelligence and generosity and glory –

53 O Sṛñjaya! If such a king
who was superior in every way to your son could die – then, O Śvaitya-ruler,
why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great yajña and gave no remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

## SECTION FIFTY-SIX

1 Nārada continued:
"We have also heard of the death of rājā Suhotra
who was so great a hero even the gods could not face him.

2 He obtained his kingdom by dharma
and sought the advice of *ṛtviks* and Brahmins
and *purohitas* and tried to rule his subjects accordingly.

3 Suhotra sought wealth by dharma
for he knew that dharma involved four principles:
protection of subjects
deeds of charity
performance of sacrifices
subduing of enemies.

4 He worshipped the gods
according to the dictates of dharma and sacred texts
and subjugated his enemies with his arrows.
He pleased all creatures with his varied talents.

5 During his rule
neither Mlecchas nor forest-robbers harassed
his subjects and the rain-god Parjanya showered gold throught out the year.

6 During his rule
the rivers flowed golden and filled the kingdom
with golden crocodiles and crabs and fishes.

7 And the clouds of Parjanya
rained golden prosperity everywhere
and even the artificial lakes were a *kroṣa* long each.

8 King Suhotra was agog
seeing his kingdom teeming with thousands
of gold hunchbacks and tortoises and crocodiles.

9 That rāja-ṛṣi
performed a sacrifice in Kurujāṅgala and gifted
incalculable gold to Brahmins on the occasion.

10 He performed
a thousand horse-sacrifices and a hundred Rājasūyas and numerous Kṣatriya-*yajñas* with large *dakṣiṇā*-gifts.

11 He performed
a large number of specific simpler *yajñas*
and achieved his desired goal.
If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you

12 And superior
to your son
in every way – if he could die –
O Śvaitya-Sṛñjaya
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña* and gave no
remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

## SECTION FIFTY-SEVEN

1 Nārada said to Sṛñjaya:
"We have also the story of the death of Rājā
Paurava
who gifted ten hundred thousand white horses.

2 At his Horse-Sacrifice
it was impossible to keep count of the Brahmins
learned
in education and calligraphy who came from
different countries.

3 Well-versed in Veda-wisdom
and strict in vows these pleasing-featured
Brahmins
received from the king garments and horses and
carpets . . .

4 They were entertained
by actors and dancers and singers and
Gandharvas
skilled in acrobatics and eager to please them.

5 At each *yajña* he performed
the *dakṣiṇā*-gifts he distributed
consisted of ten thousand golden elephants
with rutting temples

6 And golden chariots
glittering with multi-coloured pennants and
flag-poles
as well as a hundred thousand gold-ornamented
virgins

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7 Not to speak of chariots
and elephants and horses and hundreds of houses
and fields and cows and gold-decked mahātmā

8 Cow-protectors – a crore of them –
all part of the munificent *dakṣiṇā.*
Calves with golden horns and silver hooves
and brass udders

9 Together with innumerable
servants and maidservants and asses and camels
and goats
along with veritable hills of gems and edibles

10 Were gifted
at his *yajñas* as part of *dakṣiṇā.*
Singers well-versed in past glories chanted his
praises:

11 'Following his sva-dharma,
the king of the Aṅgas,
devoted to *yajña,*
performed sacrifices
in the manner ordained,
and obtained his desires.'

12 O Śvaitya-Sṛñjaya!
If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you
and superior to your son in every way
could die –
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña* and gave no
remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

## SECTION FIFTY-EIGHT

1 Nārada said to Sāñjaya:
"We have heard of the death of Uśīnara's son
Śibi
who girdled the earth with his leather-band
hegemony.

2 The noise of his chariot-wheels
could be heard on hills and seas and forests
and islands.
Every day he would slay a foe and annex a
kingdom.

3 He performed many *yajñas*
and distributed the most munificent *dakṣiṇā.*
That valiant rājā accumulated incalculable
wealth

4 And was honoured
as the finest of all heroic Kṣatriyas.
He conquered the earth and performed many
Aśvamedhas;

5 These Horse-Sacrifices
were fruitful and were accompanied by gifts of
crores
of gold coins and elephants and horses and
other animals
including deer and sheep and cows –

6 Gifts which pleased
the large numbers of pure-minded Brahmins
present.
As many raindrops that fell in the monsoon
and as many stars that shone in the sky

7 As many grains of sand
as can be found on the banks of the Gaṅgā
As many stones
as make up the mountain called Meru
As many gems and creatures
as can be found in the depths of oceans

8 So many heads of cattle
did Uśīnara's son Śibi distribute at his *yajñas.*
Even Lord-of-creatures Prajāpati never came
across another

9 In this world
capable of shouldering the burdens that Śibi did–
not in the past nor will he in the future.
Varied were the desire-fulfilling *yajñas* that
Śibi performed.

10 In his *yajñas*
the stakes and carpets and rooms and arches
were golden.
Countless Brahmins were fed the purest victuals

11 With graciously recited *kathās.*
One could see lakes of milk and sweet curd
and rivers of cool drinks and hills of delicious
food.

12 'Drink!' 'Eat!'
'Bathe!' 'Do as you please!'
Rudra-Śiva was gratified by the piety of Śibi
and said:

13 'Your wealth will remain
no matter how much you gift it away.
Your devotion and fame and good deeds will
earn you
the love of your subjects and the highest heaven.'

14 Obtaining this boon
Śibi finally had to go to the celestial realm.
If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you

15 And superior to your son
in every way – if he could die – O Śvaitya-Sṛñjaya
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña* and gave no
remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

## SECTION FIFTY-NINE

1 Nārada said to Sṛñjaya:
"We have heard that even Daśaratha's son
Rāma died.
He looked after his subjects like a father caring
for his sons.

2 Many virtues
could be seen in that infinitely energetic
personality.
Ordered by his father he for fourteen years

3 Accepted forest-exile
with his wife and younger brother Lakṣmaṇa.
In the Janasthāna forest the bull-brave hero
killed rākṣasas –

4 Fourteen thousand altogether –
in order to protect the tapasyā-practising ascetics.
While he was in the forest a rākṣasa called
Rāvaṇa

5 Abducted his wife Sītā
by tricking both Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa.
Learning of this from the mouth of Jaṭāyu
disconsolate Rāma hurried to the monkey-chief
Sugrīva.

6 Rāma met Sugrīva
and with the help of the mahā-powerful *vānara*-
chief
he had a bridge constructed over the ocean.

7 Then Rāma killed
the followers of Rāvaṇa of the race of Pulastya
and as for māyā-expert and thorn-to-people
Rāvaṇa
who was considered undefeatable by mortals –

8 In a fit of righteous wrath
Rāma killed him as three-eyed Śiva killed
Andhaka.
Whom even the gods and anti-gods could not
kill
and who was a thorn to gods and Brahmins –

9 That Pulastya-descendant Rāvaṇa
was killed along with his followers by powerful
Rāma.
After killing Rāvaṇa he went to his wife Sītā
and installed dharmātmā Vibhīṣaṇa on Laṅka's
throne.

10 And soon after
Rāma and Sītā returned to Ayodhyā on the
Puṣpaka
and the *vānara*-army of forest-folk accompanied
them.

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11 O rājā!
Rāma paid respects to his mothers and friends
and counsellors in Ayodhyā
and devoted himself to the service of *ṛtviks* and
*purohitas.*

12 Then the royal courtiers
announced and celebrated his consecration as
king.
After *hari*-rājā Sugrīva and Hanumān and
Aṅgada left,

13 Rāma offered pūjā-respect
to his brothers Bharata and Śatrughna and
Lakṣmaṇa
and basking in the love of his dear wife Vaidehī
Sītā

14 He ruled the world
to the limits of its four great oceans
and was praised by the gods for his love of his
subjects.

15 Protected by gods and ṛṣis
Rāma governed his kingdom with unceasing
concern
following the principles laid down in the
scriptures,

16 And employing dharma.
He also performed the mahā-*yajña* Rājasūya
as well as the Aśvamedha Horse-Sacrifice.

17 And Sureśa-Indra was pleased
with the large offerings in the sacred fire.
Rāma performed many other merit-productive
sacrifices.

18 Rāma removed all traces
of hunger and thirst and disease in his kingdom.
He shone in the self-glowing glory of his virtues.

19 Daśaratha's son Rāma
excelled all human beings in handsomeness.
*Ṛṣis* and gods and humans

20 Lived in harmony
on the earth when Rāma was king.
No untimely deaths occurred during his reign

21 Because the life-breaths
*prāna* and *apāna* and *samāna* were practised in accord.
Everywhere was splendour and nowhere disharmony.

22 All lived long
and no young man was taken away by death.
As laid down in the four Vedas the dwellers in heaven

23 Were greatly pleased
by ghee-offerings and other gifts by humans.
Flies and mosquitoes and snakes did not exist.

24 Death by drowning
was unknown nor was death by burning.
No one was motivated by adharma or greed or folly.

25 All the four castes
devoted themselves to performance of their duities.
The rākṣasas who obstructed in Janasthāna the pūjā

26 Of the gods and *pitṛs*
were killed by Rāma and the pūjā restored.
Men had thousands of sons and lived hundreds of years.

27 In never so happened
that elders had to perform the obsequies of juniors.
There was no crime and no theft and no disease
and no fear of hunger of illness or any calamity.

28 And so in Rāma-Rājya
the days passed in peace and security and prospeirty
and the subjects experienced no difficulty of any kind.

29 Dark-blue-skinned
and energetic and pink-eyed and gifted with
the tread of a musth elephant
was Rama.
His mahā-powerful arms reached his knees
and he had a lion's shoulders.
He ruled his kingdom eleven thousand years.

30 Ramā delighted the hearts of his subjects
and all one heard from them
was 'Rāma! Rāma! Rāma!'

31 On account of illustrious Rāma
all was Rāma in the rule of Rāma-Rājya.
Protecting his subjects he attained heaven,

32 And ensured the perpetuation
of his royal line in eight dynasties of kings.
If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you

33 And to your son
in every way – if he could die – O Śavaitya-
Sṛñjaya
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña* and gave no
remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

## SECTION SIXTY

1 Nārada said to Sṛñjaya:
"We have heard that the mahātmā rājā
Bhāgīratha also died –
he who brought the Gaṅgā on earth to ensure
prosperity
and whose fame pleased even mighty Indra.

2 He was the king
who performed a colossal Horse-Sacrifice in
which
the finest mantras and food and *dakṣiṇā* were
offered

3 So much so that Indra
drank the soma-rasa and was gratified and proceeded
to slay hundreds of anti-gods to protect Bhāgīratha.

4 Such was the respect
of the three-worlds-revered Bhagavān Indra for Bhāgīratha
who arranged to pave with flights of golden steps
the banks of the sacred – also called Bhāgīrathī.

5 In addition
he defeated many rājās and princes and bestowed
a hundred thousand gold-ornamented virgins to Brāhmins.

6 All these virgins
were seated in chariots with four steeds each
and each chariot had a hundred gold-caparisoned elephants.

7 A thousand horses
accompanied each elephant and a hundred cows each horse
and so on with sheep and countless flocks of deer.

8 The *dakṣiṇā* he offered
was so enormous that the Gaṅgā's waters swelled
and seeking his protection the river sat in his lap.

9 Because she sat in his lap
she came to be known as his daughter Bhāgīrathī
or Urvaśī – 'she who sits on the thigh, *uru*'.
As his daughter she saved him from a childless hell
as a son does – so she was also his 'son'.

10 Sun-bright Gandharvas
with melodious voices sang his praises
in the presence of gods and *pītṛs* and humans.

11 The ocean-going devī
named Gaṅgā chose the Ikṣvāku descendant Bhāgīratha
who performed huge-*dakṣiṇā yajñas* to be her father.

12 The gods led by Indra
were gratified by the sacrifices that he offered
and assisted him by removing all obstacles.

13 The disciplined king Bhāgīratha
satisfied all the desires of the Brahmins
and would attend to every wish personally.

14 Whatever precious possession the king had
he was ready to part with for their sake
and so by the grace of Brahmins
he attained the realm of Brahmā.

15 The holy men who fed
on the rays of the sun were now content to
seek nourishment
from the radiant lord-of-rājās Bhāgīratha.

16 O Svaitya Sṛñjaya !
If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you
and superior to your son in every way could die–
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña* and gave no
remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

SECTION SIXTY-ONE

1 Nārada said to Sṛñjaya:
"We have heard that Ilavala's son Dilīpa also
died.
At his hundred *yajña* countless Brahmins were
present
who were learned in the fundamentals of tantra-
reality
and who were blessed with sons and grandsons.

2 The lord of the earth
performed many sacrifices and offered the earth
with all its treasures as a gift to Brahmins.

3 For Dilīpa's *yajñas*
even the roads were paved with gold.
The gods considered him the embodiment of Dharma
and led by Indra came often to honour him.

4 Hundreds of elephants
as huge as hills roamed during these celebrations.
The main hall was golden and blazed with colour.

5 Rasa-rivers of cool drinks
flowed at these rituals and hills of food were consumed.
The sacrificial stakes were all made of gold.

6 The rings on the stakes
were also made of gold – both large and small.
Thousands of *apsarās* danced on those occasions.

7 The Gandharva-rājā Viśvavasu
himself would lovingly play the vīṇā at these *yajñas.*
All men knew rājā Dilīpa to be truth-loving.

8 Elated with the *rāga-khāṇḍava* wine
served at the *yajñas* many would leave the place intoxicated
and roam in the streets. A truly remarkable thing
happened at his *yajñas* that happened nowhere else:

9 When Dilīpa's chariot
crossed a river its wheels remained above water-level.
Whoever was lucky to have truth-speaking rājā Dilīpa's

10 Presence before him
was instantly eligible for heaven.
These five sounds never ceased in Dilīpa's palace:

11 The chanting of the Vedas
The twanging of bow-strings
The clamour of 'Drink!'
The shouts of 'Eat!'
The noise of 'Enjoy!'

[VII:61:12; 62:1-7]

12 O Svaiteya-Sṛñjaya!
If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you
and superior to your son in every way
could die –
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña* and gave no
remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

SECTION SIXTY-TWO

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1 Nārada said to Sṛñjaya:
"We have heard that Yuvanāśva's son Māndhātā
also died though he routed gods and anti-gods
and humans.

2 The twin Aśvin-gods in the distant past
pulled him out of his father's stomach.
It so happened one day Yuvanāśva was out
hunting in a forest and he suddenly felt very
tired.

3 In the distance
he noticed a puff of smoke
and reaching the *yajña*-enclosure
he drank the ghee-mixed water.

4 The twin Aśvin-gods
then pulled the ghee-conceived baby from his
stomach.
Seeing the celestially shining baby in his
father's lap

5 The gods looked
at each other and asked: 'Where will he suck?'
Vāsava-Indra replied: 'He will suck me first.'

6 From Indra's finger
gushed a flow a nectarine milk.
Because compassionate Indra said '*Māṁ
dhāsyati*' –

7 'He will suck me' –
the child came to be known as Māndhātā.
Streams of milk and ghee flowed into mahātmā
Māndhātā –

8 Yuvanāśva's son
sucked the finger of Indra and in a day
he developed into a fully strong baby.

9 In twelve days
he became as sturdy as a twelve-year old.
And he conquered the world in the course of a day.

10 He was a dharmātmā
forebearing
heroic
firm in truth
self-disciplined.
All these warriors:
Janamejaya
Sudhanvat
Gaya
Puru
Bṛhadratha

11 Asita and Nṛga –
were defeated and brought under his control.
Where the sun rises and where it sets –

12 The territory in between –
became the kingdom of Yuvanāśva's son Māndhātā.
Ha performed a hundred Horse-Sacrifice and a hundred Rājasūyas

13 And gifted to Brahmins
exquisite *rohitaka*-fish that were made of gold
and were ten *yojanas* long and ten *yojañas* broad.

14 After Brahmins had feasted
there were hillocks of delicious food and drink
left over to be relished by others.

15 Hills
of food
and cooked rice!
Rivers
of cool drinks
Lakes
of ghee
Pools
of curry
Froths
of curd
Oceans
of molasses

16 Hill-streams
of honey
Rivulets
of sweet-thick milk
Gracefully swirled
round hills of edibles.
Gods and anti-gods
humans and Yakṣas
Gandharvas
snakes and birds

17 And innumerable Brahmins
learned in the Vedas and Vedāṅgas
along with erudite ṛṣis came to the *yajñas.*

18 King Māndhātā
gifted away the entire ocean-ringed earth and its treasures to the Brahmins
and then set like the evening sun.

19 The world's quarters
resounded with his fame and he attained the pure realms.
Śṛñjaya! If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you

20 And superior to your son
in every way – if he could die – O Śvaitya
Sṛñjaya
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yojña* and gave no
remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

SECTION SIXTY-THREE

1 Nārada said to Sṛñjaya:
"We have heard that even Nahuṣa's son Yayāti
died.
He performed a hundred Rājasūyas and a
hundred Aśvamedhas

2 As well as a thousand Puṇḍarīkas
and a hundred Vājapeyas and a thousand
Atirātras
and numerous Caturmāsyas and Agniṣṭomas
and other sacrifices involving liberal *dakṣiṇā-gifts*.

3 He appropriated the wealth
of the anti-Brahmins of this earth
and donated it to the Brahmins of his kingdom.

4 The purest of rivers,
Sarasvati herself,
and the seas and the mountains
provided the pious
rājā Yayati
with ghee and milk.

5 He supported the gods
when the gods and anti-gods battled for supremacy.
He divided the earth among the four Brahmin
classes:
*ṛtvik* and *adhvaryu* and *hotṛ* and *udgātṛ*.

6 He performed many *yajñas*
and had dharma-knowing children by his two
wives:
Uśanas-Śukra's daughter Devāyanī and
Śarmiṣṭhā.

7 That god-like king like a veritable Vāsava-Indra
roamed in the forests of the gods
indulging to the full all his sensual longings.

8 Unhappy with physical pleasures
the Veda-versed king Yāyati renounced this life
and went to the forest with his wives chanting:

9 'All the paddv of this earth
all the wheat
all the gold
all the animals
all the women of this earth
cannot satisfy a man.
Let him know this
and be at peace with himself.'

10 Yāyati discarded his desires
and withdrew into the refuge of the forest
after installing his son Puru on the throne.

11 O Śvaitya-Sṛñjaya!
If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you.
and superior to your son in every way
could die –
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña* and gave no
remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

## SECTION SIXTY-FOUR

1 Nārada continued: "Sṛñjaya!
"We have heard that Nābhāga's son Ambarīṣa
who singlehanded fought wars with ten lakh
rājās had to die nonetheless.

2 They ringed him in
and attacked him with the most horrendous cries
eager to rout him but he stood firm.

3 He overwhelmed them
by his great skill and the strength of his arms
destroying their chariots and flags and umbrellas.

4 To save their lives
they discarded their coats of mail and supplicating
fell at his feet in total and pathetic surrender.

5 O faultless one! After conquering them
and subjugating the entire world
Ambarīṣa performed a hundred excellent
sacrifices
in strict conformity to the rules of the *śāstras.*

6 At thos yajñas
his subjects feasted on the finest delicacies.
The Brahmins were honoured and propitiated.

7 *Modaka*-sweets
*pūrikas*
*pūpas*
delicious *śaṣkulis*
*karambhas*
*pṛthumṛdīkas*
many kinds of main dishes

8 *Sūpas*
*maireyakas*
*rāgakhaṇḍavas*
and all varieties of confections
exquisitely prepared and laid out

9 Ghee
honey
milk
water
curd
fruits
tasty bulbs and roots –
these were served to the twice-born Brahmins.

10 Not unaware of wine's dangers
those addicted to drink consumed strong liquors
and enjoyed themselves in singing and music.

11 Intoxicated thousands
reeled and sang and sported and danced
and praised the feast of the son of Nābhāga.

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12 At these *yajñas*
rājā Ambarīṣa gave as *dakṣiṇā* to ten lakh Brahmins
the wealth of ten lakh kings.

13 These ten lakh kings
were dressed in golden armour
and came in golden chariots
and had white umbrellas and huge retinues.

14 Their sceptres and treasuries
were all gifted by Ambarīṣa to the Brahmins
so that all those who came to the *yajña* said:

15 'This was never done
by anyone in the past at any *yajña*
nor is it likely to be done in the future.

16 This deed of Ambarīṣa
stands entirely unparalleled in human history.'
The mahā-ṛṣis were pleased and sang his praises.

17 O Śvaitya-Sṛñjaya!
If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you
and superior to your son in every way
could die –
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña* and gave no remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

## SECTION SIXTY-FIVE

1 Nārada said to Sañjaya:
"We have heard that rājā Śaśabindu –
who was handsome and powerful and undefeatable also died
though he performed any number of *yajñas*.

2 That mahātmā king
had a hundred thousand wives
and each wife gave him a thousand sons.

3 These illustrious princes
each performed ten lakhs of sacrifices.
They were learned in the Vedas and faithful to tradition.

4 They wore golden armour
and excelled in the art of bowmanship.
All of them performed the Aśvamedha.

5 Their Indra-among-rājās father
thought it fit to give them away to Brahmins
with hundreds of chariots and elephants
after he had completed the Horse-Sacrifice.

6 Accompanying each prince
were a hundred lovely girls wearing gold ornaments.
With each girl were a hundred elephants
and with each elephant a hundred chariots.

7 With each chariot
were a hundred horses caparisoned in gold.
With each horse came a hundred cows
and with each cow were a hundred goats.

8 At that Aśvamedha
king Śaśabindu distributed incalculable wealth
to the Brahmins who were present at the ritual.

9 Apart from the wooden stakes
that were put up for the Horse-Sacrifice
he ordered an equal number of golden pillars constructed.

10 Hills of edibles!
Sweets and confections piled a *krosa* high!
After the Horse-Sacrifice thirteen such piles were left over.

11 He ruled his kingdom long
and saw to it that his subjects were happy and disease-free
after which king Śaśabindu went to heaven.

12 O Śvaitya-Sṛñjaya!
If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you
and superior to your son in every way
could die –
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña* and gave no
remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

SECTION SIXTY-SIX



1 Nārada continued:
"We have heard that Amūrtaraya's son Gaya
who lived a hundred years
on sacred-fire libations died nonetheless.

2 The fire-god Agni
was pleased and Gaya asked for a special boon:
'By tapasyā and *brahmacarya* and vows and rules

3 And by the grace of gurus
I wish to study the essence of the Vedas.
I desire wealth by following my sva-dharma
and by strict practice of ahiṁsā.

4 I also desire the boon
of bestowing my wealth with *śraddhā* to
Brahmins.
I wish to marry girls of my own caste only
and have children by them and not by others.'

5 May *śraddhā*-faith and dharma
rule my heart when I distribute food-gifts.
O Pāvaka-Agni!
May nothing obstruct my deeds of dharma.'

6 'So be it!'
declared Agni and disappeared.
Gaya obtained his boons and subdued his foes
with dharma.

7 And so it was that
Gaya performed various *yajñas* with huge *dakṣiṇās*
such as the Darśa and Paurṇamāsa and
Āgrayaṇa and Cāturmāsya

8 For a hundred years.
And so it was that every morning for a hundred years
one lakh cows and sixty thousand horses

9 Along with gold coins
totalling one hundred thousand and sixty thousand cattle
were distributed by the king to the assembled Brahmins.

10 He gave away *dakṣiṇā*
at every auspicious constellation-appearance
with the liberality of a Soma or an Aṅgirasa.

11 Rājā Gaya
paved the earth with gold and pebbled it with gems
and then gifted it to Brahmins during an Aśvamedha.

12 In Gava's sacrifices
the stakes were of pure gold and studded with gems
so that they entranced the minds of all.

13 To the happy Brahmins
and to others Gaya gave away those stakes
as well as various other precious articles.

14 Creatures of the sea
and of islands and rivers
Creatures of woods and forests
and towns and cities
Creatures of heaven
and creatures of the sky

15 And many other creatures
were pleased with the gifts received at the *yajñas*
and declared that no *yajñas* equalled those of Gaya.

16 The *yajña*-altar
was thirtysix *yojanas* long and thirty *yajanas* broad
and the height of the golden structure was twentyfour *yojanas*.

17 It was studded
with gems and pearls and diamonds.
This altar along with costly garments was gifted to Brahmins.

18 Large-hearted Gaya distributed *dakṣiṇā*
according to the rules of the scriptures.
Twentyfive hills of food remained uneaten after the *yajña*,

19 Along with lakes of drinks
and rivers of delicious liquids that flowed abundantly.
Perfumes and dresses and ornaments were distributed.

20 Gaya was honoured
in the three worlds as a result of that sacrifice,
and fame spread of the Eternal Banyan and the Lake of Brahmā.

21 O Śvaitya-Sṛñjaya!
If such a a four-ideals-learned king superior to you
and superior to your son in every way
could die –
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña*
and gave no remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

## SECTION SIXTY-SEVEN

1 Nārada continued: "Sṛñjaya!
"We have heard that Saṁkṛti's son Rantideva
who had as many as two hundred thousand mahātmā cooks died nonetheless.

2 Day and night
these cooks served raw and cooked food
to the Brahmin guests who came to the palace.

3 To these Brahmins
he distributed his wealth obtained by just means.
He subjugated his foes by means of dharma
because he had carefully studied the Vedas.

4 Innumerable animals
came by themselves willingly to his sacrifice
because they were eager to attain heaven
by offering their lives at a scripture-perfect *yajña*.

5 A river of juicy secretions
flowed from the skins that were piled in the
kitchen –
the skins of animals sacrificed at the *yajña* –
called Carmaṇvatī the 'Skin-Juice' River.

6 He distributed
shining golden *niṣka*-coins to Brahmins saying
'These *niṣkas* are yours, these *niṣkas* are yours.'

7 'For you, for you' –
saying this he would distribute the gold coins.
To the still unsatisfied he would gladly give more.

8 In a single day
he gave away crores of gold coins saying
'I have not given much today'. Such was his
nature.
What man can be as large-hearted as that?

9 He would gift wealth saying
'If I fail to give wealth in Brahmin hands
I have not the least doubt I will suffer.'

10 A *niṣka*-offering is calculated as
one thousand golden bulls with one hundred
cows
accompanying each bull and one hundred and
eight coins.

11 For a hundred years
Rantideva gave away countless *niṣka*-offerings
to Brahmins together with the *agnihotṛ* articles.

12 To the *ṛṣis*
he gifted the utensils such as plates and cups
and jars
along with carpets and vehicles and palatial
dwellings

13 As well as trees
and many varieties of food and drink.
All the utensils of Rantideva were made of gold.

14 Seeing his divine riches
all those who were knowledgeable of the past
chanted his praise in the following song:

15 'Such treasures are not found
in Kubera's den.
How can they be found
in the world of men?'

16 People would say:
'The kingdom of Saṁkṛti's son Rantideva is
made of gold.
On the nights when guests came to his palace

17 Twentyone thousand cows
were sacrificed in order to feed them.
The royal cooks who wore jewelled ear-rings
would say:

18 'Feast on curries today
for there is not as much meat today as there
usually is.'
Whatever gold possessions Rantideva had

19 Were donated
to Brahmins during one of these large *yajñas.*
The gods personally accepted the sacred-fire
ghee libations.

20 The *pitṛs* also
accepted the food that was offered to them.
The Brahmins obtained all they desired from him.

21 O Śvaitya-Sṛñjaya!
If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you
and superior to your son in every way
could die –
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña* and gave no
remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

## SECTION SIXTY-EIGHT

1 Nārada said to "Sṛñjaya!
"We have heard that Duṣyanta's son Bharata
who performed incredible feats in the forest
even as a child
died nonetheless.

2 He was so strong
that he would grapple with sharp-clawed white-maned lions
and drag them wherever he pleased.

3 He could tame
the fiercest and wildest tigers
and he could lift up massive red-coloured boulders
with effortless ease.

4 He would seize
venomous serpents and grasp the tusks of huge elephants
and shake them till their mouths dried with fear.

5 His strength was such
that he could drag and subdue giant buffaloes
and make mild hundreds of ferocious lions.

6 He tamed tigers
and rhinoceroses and other wild beasts by twisting
thick ropes round their necks till they nearly
suffocated.

7 For these feats
Brahmins called him Sarvadamana or the
Subduer-of-all.
His mother Śakuntalā stopped him from
tormenting animals.

8 Such was his greatness
that he performed a hundred Aśvamedhas on
the Yamuna
and three hundred on the banks of Sarasvati
and four hundred on the banks of the Gaṅgā.

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9 Having performed these
he performed a thousand more Aśvamedhas
and a hundred Rājasūya sacrifices
and made them occasions of liberal *dakṣiṇās* to Brahmins.

10 He performed other sacrifices too
such as the Agniṣṭoma and Atirātra and Viśvajit
along with ten lakh Vājapeya *yajñas.*

11 Śakuntalā's son rājā Bharata
pleased the Brahmins with his generous gifts.
To the sage Kaṇva he gave one thousand lotuses

12 Made of gold
of the finest quality procured from Jāmbunāda.
The golden stakes one hundred *vyāmas* tall

13 That graced his *yajñas*
were visited by Indra and the gods and Brahmins.
Gold-decorated and glittering-with-enchanting-gems

14 Horses and elephants and camels and goats and chariots
along with servants and maidservants
and wealth in the form of grain and cows and slaves

15 As well as entire villages
and houses and fields and variegated dresses
and ten crores of gold coins were given to Brahmins

16 By the large-ātmaned
foe-conquering emperor of the world named Bharata.
If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you

17 O Śvaitya-Sṛñjaya
and superior to your son in every way –
if he could die
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña*
and gave no remarkable *dakṣiṇā*-charity?"

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

## SECTION SIXTY-NINE

1 Nārada said to "Sṛñjaya!
"We have heard that Vena's son Pṛthu
who was installed world-emperor by mahā-ṛṣis
after the performance of the Rājasūya sacrifice
died nonetheless.

2 He routed his enemies
and brilliantly organised his territories
for which reason he was called Pṛthu or Illustrious.
Because he protected his subjects from dangers
he was a true Kṣatriya or Protector.

3 Seeing Vena's son Pṛthu
all the subjects declared 'We are pleased.'
Because he received their *anurāga* or affection
he was known as the Rājā.

4 For king Pṛthu
the earth became the wish-fulfilling cow
Kāmadhenu.
All the cows gave milk freely and bounteously
and even the leaves of trees were rich with honey.

5 Golden the *kuśa* grass!
Soft to the touch
And pleasing to the eye!
Dresses were made of this grass
And mats were woven of it.

6 The fruits of trees
were sweet and delicious like nectar
and were the staple diet of the people.
No one went hungry.

7 There was no illness.
All desires were satisfied. There was no fear.
People lived under trees or in caves as they
pleased.

8 Pṛthu's kingdom
was not divided into section and areas.
All his subjects lived in harmony with each other.

[VII:69:9-15]

Transcreated by P.Lal

9 The waves of the sea
stilled when Pṛthu ddecided to cross them
and mountains opened for him when he passed.
His chariot's flag-staff was never known to break.

10 To him once
the trees of the forests
the hills
the gods and anti-gods
humans and reptiles
the seven *ṛṣis*
the holy ascetics
the Gandharvas and *apsarās*

11 And the *pitṛs*
came and said:
'You are our Emperor
You are our Kṣatriya
You are our Rājā
Our saviour and our father.

12 Mahārāja:
Grant us these boons
so that we may live
happily and prosperously
till the end of time.'

13 'So be it!'
said Pṛthu and granted all their requests.
He picked up his Ajagava bow and fearful arrows
whose equals could not be found anywhere
and he said to the Earth:

14 'Earth! Be blessed!
Grant my subjects the milk they desire.
From your milk I will provide the food they
desire.'

15 The Earth replied: 'O valiant one!
You must then look upon me as your daughter.'
Pṛthu replied 'So be it' and made all the
arrangements.

16 All the creatures of the world
began milking the Earth.
First to milk her were the trees of the forest.

17 Earth stood there
like a loving cow looking for her calf
and a milker and a pot for the milk.
The flowering *śāla*-tree became her calf
and the *plakṣa*-tree became her milker.

18 The sacred fig-tree
became the milk-pot and milk flowed like
falling petals.
Then the eastern hills became the calf
and mahā Mount Meru became her milker.

19 Jewels and precious stones
and healing herbs became the flow of milk.
Then the gods became the milkers
and whatever gives energy became the milk.

20 Then the anti-gods
milked māyā-milk in an unbaked clay pot.
Dvimūrdhā became milker and Virocana the calf.

21 Then humans milked her
and agricultural products and crops became the
milk.
Self-born Manu became calf and Pṛthu the milker.

22 Then the snakes milked her
and received poison in their copper vessels.
Dhṛtarāṣṭra became milker and Takṣaka the calf.

23 Next the seven sages milked her
and Brahmā became milk and sacred chant the
vessel.
Bṛhaspati was milker and rājā Soma the calf.

24 The Yakṣas miled her
for magical powers received in an earthen pot.
Vaiśravaṇa became milker and Vṛṣadhvaja the
calf.

[VII:69:25-32]

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25 The Gandharvas and rom *apsarās*
milked her for fragrance in lotus-petal vessels.
Citraratha became calf and Viśvaruci the milker.

26 The *pitṛs* milked her
for *svadhā* in silver vessels.
Yama became calf and Antaka the milker.

27 And so it happened
that the Earth was milked by all creatures
for the satisfaction of their desires.
The vessels and calves can be seen even today.

28 And Vena's son Pṛthu
performed many *yajñas* and succeeded in satisfying
the desires of all who wanted various things

29 He ordered all objects
of the Aśvamedha yajña to be made of gold
and after the sacrifice he gave them to Brahmins.

30 Sixtysix thousand statues
of elephants were fashioned life-size in gold
and given as *dakṣiṇā* to Brāhmins.

31 The whole Earth
was adorned with gems and jewels and gold
and was gifted to the Brahmins at the *yajña.*

32 O Śvaitya-Sṛñjaya!
If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you
and superior to your son in every way
could die –
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña*
and gave no remarkable dakṣiṇā-charity?"

## SECTION SEVENTY

1 Nārada said to "Sṛñjaya!
"Even Paraśurāma whose mahā-tapasyā earned him
the namaskāras of all the heroes of the world
had to die with his desires unfulfilled.

2 He preached the truths
of the world's first age after stabilising the earth
and he was incorruptible and always the finest.

3 When some Kṣatriyas
stole his calf and killed his father
he vowed to exterminate all Kṣatriyas
and began by slaying never-before-defeated Kārtavirya.

4 He made up his mind
and singlehanded with a single bow he killed
sixty crores of Kṣatriyas.

5 In that carnage
he also subdued fourteen thousand Brahmin-haters and killed the ruler named Dantakrūra.

6 With his mace
he killed a thousand Kṣatriyas
With his sword
he killed another thousand
He hanged to death
another thousand Kṣatriyas
He killed by drowning
a thousand more.

7 He smashed the teeth
and cut the noses and ears of a thousand Kṣatriyas
and seven thousand he killed by exposing to severe heat.

8 Many Kṣatriyas
he slew after capturing them and many he decapitated.
North of Guṇavati and south of Khāṇḍava forest
he killed hundreds of thousands of Haihayas –

9 They lay on the field
with their horses and elephants and chariots
slain by intelligent Paraśurāma enraged over his father's murder.

10 With his battle-axe
Paraśurāma killed ten thousand Kṣatriyas.
He could not tolerate the taunts of Brahmins

11 So that when the twice-born
said gently to him, 'Paraśurāma, save yourself'
he was furious at their show of cowardice.
Kāśmira
Darada
Kuntī
Kṣudraka
Mālava

12 Aṅga and Vaṅga
Kaliṅga
Videha
Tāmralipta
Rakṣorāha
Vitihotra
Trigarta
Mārtikāvata

13 The kingdom of the Śibis
and many other Kṣatriya rājās' territories
were subjugated by the fierce arrows of Paraśurāma.

14 In the each country
he killed lakhs and crores of Ksatriyas until
their *indragopaka*-insect and *bandhujiva*-flower-like

15 Crimson blood filled
lake after lake and all the eighteen islands
were brought under the dominion of Paraśurāma.

16 Then he performed
a hundred purificatory sacrifices with liberal *dakṣiṇās*.
The altar was made of gold and thirtytwo hands high

17 And studded with gems
and fluttering with hundreds of holy flags.
That altar along with the earth and its wild and tame beasts

18 Was accepted by Kaśyapa
as an offering from Jamadagni's son Paraśurāma
who also gave away thousands of gold-adorned elephants.

19 Paraśurāma rid the earth
of robbers and filled her with gentle and friendly inhabitants
and then offered her to Kaśyapa at his mahā-Aśvamedha.

20 Powerful Paraśurāma depopulated
the earth of Kṣatriyas twentyone times over
and after a hundred sacrifices gave her to Brahmins.

21 The seven-islanded earth
was gifted by him to Marica's son Kasyapa
who then said to Paraśurāma:
'You have my permission now to leave the earth.'

22 Obedient to a Brahmin
and respecting the words of Kaśyapa
Paraśurāma rolled back the ocean with his arrows.

23 And proceeded to dwell
on the finest of mountains known as Mahendra.
Even the Bhṛgu-glory enhancer and gloriously-guṇa-gifted

24 Son of Jamadagni
who shone with mahā-spiritual radiance had to die.
He was superior to you in the four ideals
and superior to your son yet he had to die.

25 You should not therefore
grieve over the death of your son
who performed no great sacrifice and offered no special *dakṣiṇā.*
All these excellent men
superior to you in the four ideals and other qualities had to die."

SECTION SEVENTY-ONE

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1 Vyāsa said:
Sṛñjaya heard these sacred stories of sixteen kings
that have the power to prolong the listener's life
and he kept silent.

2 The bhagavān *ṛṣi* Nārada
saw him sitting in complete silence and said:
"You are a mahā-radiant person
and you have understood the import of my stories.

3 Or can it be
that their meaning has been lost on you
like a *śrāddha* performed by a Brahmin
who cohabits with a Śūdra woman?"
Sṛñjaya did *añjali* and replied:

4 "Powerful mahā-ṛṣi!
I have heard these excellent stories mahā-ṛṣis
who performed massive *yajñas* and gave large *dakṣiṇās*

5 And my grief is dispelled by their grandeur
like mists by the sun.
My weakness is gone. I feel no pain.
What should I do now?"

6 Nārada said:
"It is your good fortune that your grief as gone.
Ask for anything. You will get it.
We do not make false promises."

7 Sṛñjaya replied:
"I am happy that you are pleased with me.
Nothing is denied that man with whom you are pleased."

8 Nārada said:
"I will return to you your son
who was killed by robbers like a sacrificial animal.
I shall take you out of this painful hell."

9 Vyāsa continued:
"The resplendent son of Sṛñjaya resembling Kubera's son
was returned to his father the pleased ṛṣi.

10 King Sṛñjaya
was delighted to have his son returned to him
and gifted merit-earning to the *yajña*-performers.

11 Sṛñjaya's mission in life
had not been completed:
he had no other children and he performed *yajñas.*
He lacked bravery and did not die on the battlefield.
That is why he was given a new lease of life.

12 As for Abhimanyu
he was brave and had finished his life-mission
for he fell fighting on the battlefield
after killing thousands of his enemies.

13 Your son Abhimanyu
attained the eternal realm that is achieved only
by those who observe brahmacarya
and perform the *yajña.*

14 Learned men
always seek to achieve heaven by pious deeds
but the heaven-dwellers have no desire to return to earth.

15 It is not possible
to see any reason why Abhimanyu should want
to return to earth. He is happy in heaven.

16 Your son has attained
the regions of yogis
who perform meditation
by closing their eyes,
or the *yajña*-performers
or the rich in tapasyā.

17 He shines in new glory
like a newly-crowned rājā.
His body is bright
with the light of the moon
like a Brahmin's body.
So give up your grief.

18 You know the facts.
O defectless one! Be at peace. Show courage.
Grieve if you must for the living
not for those who are in heaven.

19 Mahārāja! The ill karma of the person
whom the living mourn goes on increasing.
Which is why the wise discard grief
and work only for the welfare of the dead.

20 Living creatures
should remember only the joy and proud
glory of the dead.
Be firm in truth.
Grief is only grief.
The wise have nothing to do with grief.

21 This then is the truth.
Rise.
Stand straight.
Do not grieve.
You know the origin of Death
And her great tapasyā.

22 You know how Death
behaves equally towards all creatures.
You know that prosperity
cannot be depended upon.
You have also heard
how Sṛñjaya's dead son was revived.

23 Mahārāja! Now you know everything.
Do not grieve."
Saying this
*Bhagavan* Vyāsa disappeared.

24 With the disappearance
of bhagavān Vyāsa whose complexion was
dark as a cloudy sky
Yudhiṣṭhira found consolation

25 As a result
of what he had heard about the merits obtained
by the great kings as powerful as Indra
who all obtained wealth by pious deeds.

26 He praised them
in his mind and found peace of mind.
Yet he asked himself a little sadly:
"What will I tell Dhanañjaya-Arjuna?"

## SECTION SEVENTY-TWO

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
While Dhanañjaya-Arjuna was battling with
the do-or-die Saṁśaptakas
the finest of heroes Abhimanyu was slain.

2 Mahā-ṛṣi Vyāsa arrived
and consoled wild-with-grief Yudhiṣṭhira
but what did Yudhiṣṭhira
and the other Pāṇḍavas do after Vyāsa left?

3 How did *vānara*-bannered Arjuna
return from his battle with the Saṁśaptakas
and who broke the news to him of his son's
slaughter?
Tell me all this in detail, Sañjaya."

4 Sañjaya replied:
That terrible day of butchery passed
and as the sun set
soothing and auspicious *saṁdhyā*-twilight arrived.

5 O bull-brave Bharata!
The soldiers of both armies retired to their camps
and after killing the do-or-die Saṁśaptakas
with his divine weapons, ape-emblemed Arjuna

6 Riding his victorious chariot
to his pavilion kept asking Govinda-Krishna
in a voice choked with tears.

7 "Something is wrong, Keśava-Krishna.
My mind is uneasy and my speech unclear.
I see ill omens and I feel weak all over.

8 I apprehend some calamity has struck me
and I am unable to overcome it.
Terrible omens seem to surround me on all sides.

9 There can be no doubt
that all these omens point to something horrible.
I hope all is well with rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
and his gurus and advisers."

10 Vāsudeva-Krishna replied:
"Clearly all is well with your brother and his ministers.
Control yourself.
If anything has happened, it is something else."

11 Sañjaya continued:
The two heroes worshipped the *saṁdhyā*-twilight
and proceeded in their chariot,
casually discussing the highlights of the day's battle.

12 Having performed impossible feats
Vāsudeva-Krishna and Arjuna reached the Pāṇḍava camp
but both looked dispirited and joyless.

13 Foe-crushing Arjuna
saw the Pāṇḍava camp confused and uneasy
and turning to Krishna Bībhatsu-Arjuna
said sadly:

14 "No auspicious music, Janārdana-Krishna!
I do not hear the welcome of conches
blended with the sound of *dundubhi*-drums.

15 Nor is the vīṇā heard
to the accompaniment of soft clapping.
The melodies of auspicious songs and chants

16 By my army's minstrels –
these too are not heard – and the soldiers
turn away their faces as soon as they see me.

17 They welcome me listlessly, Mādhava-Krishna,
not with any show of genuine delight.
Is everything all right with my brothers?

18 My mind is apprehensive
when I see my own people worried and distressed.
Is all well with the Pāñcāla-rājā and Virāṭa

19 And with the other heroes? Acyuta-Krishna!
Why is it that today Subhadrā's smiling son
accompanied by his brothers has not come
to greet me on my return from the battlefield?"

20 Sañjaya continued:
So they entered the camp of the Pāṇḍavas
and saw the brothers sitting and brooding in sorrow.

21 *Vānara*-emblemed Arjuna
saw his brothers and sons pensive and became dejected.
Not seeing Saubhadra-Abhimanyu anywhere he said:

22 "I see your faces are pale.
Abhimanyu is not here.
You have not welcomed me.

23 I am told
Droṇa arrayed his troops in the *cakra*-formation.
None can pierce that formation except
Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu.

24 I did not teach him
how to escape out of the *cakra*-formation.
Can it be that one of you sent that young boy
to the *cakra*?

25 Is it true
that Subhadrā's foe-crushing mahā-bowman-son
pierced the *cakra*-formation and has been killed?

26 Tell me how he died –
that mahā-muscled pink-eyed hero who strode
like a lion
and who had the magnificence of Upendra-
Krishna himself.

27 How was he killed –
Vāsava-Indra's own grandson and the delight
of my eyes?
How was Abhimanyu the mahā-bowman killed?

28 Which Kāla-deluded warriors
dared to kill the dearly-loved son of Subhadrā
who was also the favourite of Draupadī and
Keśava-Krishna and Kuntī?

29 How could he have been killed
for he equalled mahātmā Keśava-Krishna
of the Vṛṣṇis
in valour and in wisdom of the *śrutis.*

30 If I cannot today see that Vṛṣṇi warrior
who was loved so deeply by his mother Subhadrā
and cherished by me, I shall enter the abode
of Yama.

31 He had soft and curly hair
he was young
he had gazelle eyes
he walked like a musth elephant
he was as tall as a śāla tree

32 He was smiling and sweet-spoken
always obedient to his gurus
he was free from malice
and brilliantly accomplished though young.

33 He was mahā-enterprising and mahā-muscled
his eyes were large lotus-petals
he was kind to his *bhaktas*
he was self-disciplined
he never stooped to meanness.

34 He was always grateful
always full of the humility of learning
he was versed in all weapons
never-retreating on the battlefield
he delighted in warfare
and was the terror of his enemies

35 He fought for the success of his cause
he desired the glory of his *pitṛs*
he never struck first against a foe
he never showed fear on the field –

36 If I fail to see my son
I will go to the abode of Yāma.
Among chariot-heroes he was a mahā-chariot-hero.

37 He was young but strong-armed
one-and-a-half times superior to me
he was my favourite
as well as Pradyumna's and Keśava-Krishna's –

38 If I fail to see my son
I will go to the abode of Yāma.
He had a fine nose and forehead
fine eyes and eyebrows
fine teeth and lips –

39 If I fail to see his face
I shall have no peace of mind.
His voice was as sweet as a stringed musical instrument
as melodious as a kokila –

40 If I fail to hear his voice
I shall have no peace of mind.
He was handsome
more handsome than the gods in heaven –

41 If I cannot see my brave son
I shall have no peace of mind.
He was gracious in welcome
prompt in obeying his elders –

42 If I cannot see him today
I shall have no peace of mind.
He was strikingly handsome
he deserved the finest of luxurious beds

43 Yet he lies on the earth today
helpless though there were many to look after him.
The loveliest ladies attended on him
when he reclined on his bed

44 Yet today he lies arrow-pierced
with ill-omened jackals prowling around him.
He used to be woken from sleep
by the songs of Sūtas and court minstrels

45 And now he will be roused
by the screams of predatory beasts.
His gentle and handsome face
that deserved the shade of umbrellas

46 Will be dirtied today
by the swirling dust of the battlefield.
Hai my son!
I who never tired of having your darshan –

47 How unfortunate I am
that Kāla should snatch you away from me!
I am sure that the sense-stilling abode of Yama
which is the refuge of men of good deeds –

48 That charming place –
has been enriched by your glory and radiance.
Surely Vaivasvata-Yama and Varuṇa –

49 And Śatakratu-Indra of a hundred sacrifices
are preparing to honour you today."
Lamenting like a merchant whose ship has sunk

50 Mahā-grieving Arjuna said to Yudhiṣṭhira:
"Delighter of the Kuru race!
After spreading havoc among his bull-brave heroes

51 Tell me –
did my son finally enter heaven?
It must be that while battling those bull-brave heroes

52 Singlehanded
he must have thought I would come to his help.
Harassed by Karṇa and Droṇa and Kṛpa with sharp arrows

53 With polished heads
my unprepared inexperienced son must have thought:
*My father will save me in this predicament.*

54 And even as he thought this
I have a feeling his cruel foes rushed and killed him.
Or could it be that being my son who is also Mādhava-Krishna's nephew

55 The child of Subhadrā's womb
refused to let himself think in that way?
My heart must be made of the hardest stone

56 If it does not shatter
at not seeing my long-armed and pink-eyed son!
How could the cruel Kauravas dare to attack that boy

57 Who was my son
and Vāsudeva-Krishna's nephew – how could they dare?
That generous-ātmaned child who daily welcomed me

58 When I returned
after killing my foes – will he not receive me today?
He lies on the battlefield drenched in his blood

59 Like a fallen sun
enhancing the earth's beauty with his splendour.
I grieve for Subhadrā whose never-retreating son

60 Will never return
for her grief will be such that she might even die.
What will Subhadrā say to me when she sees him missing

61 And what will I tell Draupadī
who will be overcome with sorrow?
It must be my heart is made of hardest stone

62 If it does not shatter
into a hundred fragments seeing Subhadrā mourn.
I can hear the leonine war-cries of the jubliant Kauravas.

63 Krishna heard Yuyutsu
rebuke the mahā-chariot-heroes of the Kauravas:
'Unable to kill dreadful-deed-doer Arjuna
you slaughtered this boy –

64 Is this something to gloat over?
Now you will feel the terror of Pāṇḍu's son.
Insulting Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield

65 You roar like lions!
The hour of your grief is on you! The call of Kāla!
You will taste the fruit of your criminal karma.

66 It is a terrible adharma!
Its fruits cannot be too long in coming!'
Saying this Dhṛtarāṣṭra's mahā-minded son
by a Vaiśyā woman

67 Discarded his weapons
and disgustedly walked out of the Kaurava camp.
O Krishna!
Why did you not tell me all this earlier?

68 I would have exterminated
all the mahā-chariot-heroes of the Kauravas!"
Pūrtha-Arjuna's eyes overflowed with grief for his son

69 And Vāsudeva-Krishna consoled him
for he was overpowered by filial love.
Krishna said to him: "Check your grief.

70 What has happened
is bound to happen to a never-retreating hero
especially a Kṣatriya pledged to victory or death.

71 All the śāstras
are agreed that this is the noblest end
for a hero who never shows his back on the battlefield.

72 Death is inevitable
for the never-retreating Kṣatriya hero.
Abhimanyu has attained the realm of the virtuous.

73 O bull-brave Bharata! O bestower of honour on others!
The finest heroes look forward to such an end:
that they should fall facing their enemies.

74 Abhimanyu was responsible
for sending many mahā-powerful heroic princes
to their deaths and he has now achieved the death he himself desired.

75 O tiger among men!
Do not grieve. The ancient dharma-knowers have declared
that a Kṣatriya dying in battle exemplifies Sanātana Dharma.

76 O finest of the Bharatas!
If you give in to depression and despair
your brothers and friends will also lose heart.

77 O bestower of honours!
Instead you should comfort and console them.
You have the wisdom that is worth having.
You must not grieve."

78 Advised by the creator-of-commendable-karma Krishna
Pārthā-Arjuna turned to his brothers
and said to them in a tear-choked voice:

79 "Long-armed Abhimanyu
who had eyes as lovely as lotus-petals –
how did he fight? – tell me all in detail.

80 I will destroy them all!
I will destroy their elephants and chariots and horses!
I will destroy all my son's enemies!
I will destroy all their kinsmen!

81 You are all armed
with weapons and well-versed in their use.
How then could Abhimanyu have died –
even if thunder-wielding Indra faced him?

82 If I had any idea
that all the Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas were incompetent
to give my son protection on the battlefield
I would have personally gone to help him.

83 You rode your chariots
and you fired your arrows.
How did it happen then that the enemy
pierced your ranks and slaughtered Abhimanyu?

84 Aho! You are cowards!
You are not heroes at all.
Or how could it happen that Abhimanyu died
in front of your very eyes?

85 I should blame myself
for I knew you to be spineless cowards
and yet I went away.

86 These arms you flaunt –
these weapons of attack and of defence –
what are these? – empty decorations?
What are you good for? boasting in assemblies?
You failed to protect my son, didn't you?"

87 Dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna said this
and sat down still holding his bow and sword.
No one had the courage to look at him.

88 He was like Antaka-Death
as he sat there angrily and heavily breathing.
Tears of sorrow flowed down his cheeks.

89 No person present dared to speak to him
except Vasudeva's son Krishna
or Pāṇḍu's eldest son Yudhiṣṭhira.

90 They always wished his welfare.
He admired them and they felt free with him.
They were the friends who addressed him then.

91 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
turned to Arjuna who had lotus-lovely eyes
and spoke to his agitated and grieving brother.

## SECTION SEVENTY-THREE

1 Yudhiṣṭhira said: O mahā-muscled one!
While you were fighting against the Saṁśaptaka warriors
ācārya Droṇa did his utmost to take me captive.

2 We deployed ourselves
in a counter-formation and planned to resist
the onslaught of Droṇa and his disciplined soldiers.

3 Droṇa was well blocked
and I was excellently protected by my soldiers
yet he continued to shower sharp arrows at us.

4 Such was his strength
that my soldiers did not dare even to look at him
let alone think of piercing his formation.

5 We turned to Saubhadra-Abhimanyu
who had no peer in prowess and we said to him:
"*Tāta*! Dear one! Only you can pierce Droṇa's ranks."

6 At our pleading
valiant Abhimanyu prepared himself like an obedient steed
to take on the onerous task of attacking Droṇa.

7 That adolescent youth
with skill in weapons learnt from you
sliced through their ranks with brilliant bravery
like Suparṇa-Garuḍa gliding through the waters of the ocean.

8 We followed Subhadrā's son
on the path he had sliced through for us
for we were eager to enter our enemy's ranks.

9 But it so happened
that taking advantage of a boon received from Rudra-Śiva
Rājā Jayadratha of the Sindhus blocked our progress.

10 Droṇa, Kṛpa, Karṇa, Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman, Bṛhadbala, Kṛtavarman –
these six chariot-heroes quickly encircled Subhadrā's son.

11 Surrounded by those mahā-chariot-heroes
the boy warrior fought back but was unchazrioted
because the odds were overwhelmingly against him.

12 Though himself harassed
Duḥśāsana's son took advantage of unchariotcd
Abhimanyu and succeeded in killing him.

13 After making short work
of thousands of soldiers
horses
chariots
tusked elephants
eight thousand chariot-heroes
nine hundred elephants –

14 Two thousand princes
and many unknown heroes –
and having despatched rājā Bṛhadbala
to his abode in heaven –

15 The supreme dharmātmā Abhimanyu
achieved the end that was destined for him.
He has gone to the heaven of noble souls.

16 He never showed weakness on the battlefield
he terrified his enemies and delighted his friends.
Honouring the memory of his *pitṛs* and maternal ancestors

17 He left this world
plunging his hosts of friends in the deepest grief.
We were mourning his death when you arrived.
This is the calamity that has stunned us all.

18 This is the way
that tiger-among-men attained the highest heaven."
Aijuna heard Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira and said:

19 "Hai! My son!"
Sighing deeply he collapsed on the ground.
All who were present looked sadly at Dhanañjaya-Arjuna

20 And in their grief
gazed unblinking at each other with vacant eyes.
Regaining his senses and burning with anger

21 Vāsavi-Arjuna sighed and wept
and squeezed his hands and shivering as if with fever
he rolled his eyes like a madman and said:

22 "I vow this before you:
Tomorrow I will kill Jayadratha – that is
if he does not turn tail and desert Duryodhana

23 And seek my mercy
or Puruṣottama-Krishna's or your mercy, mahārāja.
I will kill Jayadratha tomorrow.

24 I will kill him tomorrow
for he has forgotten our friendship
and wishes only the welfare of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son
and has conspired with them to slaughter my son.

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25 Droṇa or Kṛpa –
whoever tries to shield Jayadratha from my wrath
will feel the full brunt of my arrows, O rājā.

26 O bull-brave ones!
If I fail to keep my promise tomorrow
then let me never attain the regions of the
righteous

27 The regions of those
who rape their mothers and kill their fathers
The regions of those
who sleep with their gurus' wives and always
speak ill

28 The regions of those
who despise the good and the noble
The regions of those
who embezzle and deceive and defalcate

29 The regions of those
who enjoy women enjoyed by others
The regions of those
who kill Brahmins and slaughter cows

30 The regions of those
who taste *pāyasa* and other milk products
along with herbs and sesamum and rice
and sweet cakes and *pūpa* and meat
without first sanctifying them before the gods –

31 Let those regions be mine
if I fail to kill Jayadratha tomorrow!
The regions of those
who abuse Brahmins devoted to study of the
Vedas

32 The regions of those
who abuse the venerable and the elderly
The regions of those
who touch Brahmins and the sacred fire with
their feet.

33 The regions of those
who shit and piss and spit in water –
Let those regions be mine
if I fail to kill Jayadratha tomorrow!

34 The regions of those
who bathe stark naked
The regions of those
who refuse a guest hospitality

35 The regions of those
who take bribes, tell lies, praise falsely,
who eat sweets without sharing them
in front of servants, sons, wives, and dependents –

36 May the regions
that await such scoundrels
await me too
if I fail to kill Jayadratha tomorrow!

37 The regions of those wretched ones
who reject a noble truth-speaker
instead of supporting him
in his time of need

38 The regions of those
who refuse a deserving neighbour
and give *śrāddha*-offerings
to the undeserving dead –

39 The regions of those
who get drunk, who are ungrateful,
who speak ill of brothers,
who defame the respectworthy –
may those regions be mine
if I fail to kill Jayadratha tomorrow!

40 The regions of those
who eat with their left hand
who eat from a platter placed in their lap
and who loll in luxury and take *tinduka*-drugs–
The regions that await them,
may they await me too!

41 The regions of those Brahmins who fear cold
and those Kṣatriyas who fear war –
the village that drinks water from one well only
and where the chants of Vedas are not heard –

42 The regions of those who stay in such a village,
and of those who despise the *Śāstras* –
The regions of those who have sex in the daytime
and sleep in the daytime,
of those who set fire to others' houses
and administer poison to others –

43 The regions of those who respect
neither the sacred fire nor their guests –
who place obstacles
to the supply of water to cows –
who sleep with menstruating women
and offer their daughters for money –

44 Who being Brahmins exploit the priesthood
by performing excessive sacrifices –
The regions of those who have oral sex
or copulate in the morning –

45 Of those who go back on their promise
to have progeny by a Brahmin –
May those regions be mine
if I fail to kill Jayadratha tomorrow.

46 The punishment of such dharma-violators
as I have listed,
and of such as I have failed to list –
my such punishment be mine

47 If I fail to kill Jayadratha
after tonight has passed.
Listen also to the vow
that I now make –

48 If tomorrow the sun sets
without my killing this scoundrel,
I shall immolate myself
in a blazing fire.

49 Neither anit-gods nor gods
nor humans nor birds
nor reptiles nor *pitṛs*
nor creatures of the night
nor the Brahma-ṛṣis
nor the deva-ṛṣis
nor animate or inanimate beings
will succeed in saving
my enemy from death.

50 Let him run to Rasātala!
Let him hide in the sky!
Let him fly to heaven
or the realm of the Daityas!
With hundreds of arrows
I will slice off the head
of the scoundrelly foe
of my son Abhimanyu,
before the night is over."

51 Saying this,
Arjuna twanged his bow with both hands.
The twang reverberated through the sky
drowning the sound of his voice.

52 After Arjuna had taken the vow,
Krishna blew on his conch Pāñcajanya
in high excitement.
Arjuna blew on his conch Devadatta.

53 Aroused with the breath
of undecaying Krishna,
the conch Pāñcajanya
released such a vibration
that the whole universe,
the underworld realm,
the sky and the quarters
were atremble as if
a yuga was ending.

54 When mahātmā Arjuna made his vow,
the commingled din
of thousands of instruments and war-cries
filled the Pāṇḍava camp.

55 "Your promise and Krishna's conch-blast,"
said Bhīma to Arjuna,
"assures me Duryodhana and his kinsmen
are doomed.

56 Finest of mortals,
there is truth in your words.
I am pleased with your vow.
Your vow most effectively
wipes out the grief
of Abhimanyu's death,
which nearly succeeded
in withering the lovely
neck-garland you wear."

## SECTION SEVENTY-FOUR

1 The spies of Duryodhana (Sañjaya said)
informed Jayadratha
of the clamorous Pāṇḍavas eager for victory,
and Jayadratha rose.

2 Heart heavy with grief,
mind overcome with bewilderment,
like one sinking in sea of sorrow,
a fathomless sea,

3 The rājā of the Sindhus reflected
for a while,
then went to the assembly of kings
and said plaintively,

4 Because he feared the father of Abhimanyu
and was shame-afflicted:
"This man, child of Pāṇḍu's wife
by lustful Śakra-Indra,

5 This stupid wretch wishes to send me
to the realm of Yama.
May you all prosper! I shall go home,
for I want to live.

6 Protect me, O bull-brave Kṣatriyas!
Brandish your weapons
and save me from Pārtha-Arjuna
who has vowed to kill me.

7 Droṇa, Duryodhana, Kṛpa, Karṇa,
the ruler of Madra,
Bāhlīka, Duḥśāsana and others
can defy Death himself.

8 What can prevent them from saving me
from one Phālguna-Arjuna?
They are the lords of earth,
and they are united.

9 I hear the joyful Pāṇḍavas roaring,
and mahā-fear grips me, O earth-lords!
My limbs fail me, like the limbs of one
about to die.

10 It must be that Gāṇḍīva-wielding Arjuna
has vowed to kill me.
Else why are the Pāṇḍavas so exultant
when they should be weeping?

11 Gods, gandharvas, anti-gods, nāgas,
and rākṣasas
cannot neutralise a vow by Arjuna;
what can earth-lords do?

12 O bull-brave heroes! May you prosper!
I seek your permission to leave.
I shall go into hiding.
I'll escape the Pāṇḍavas."

13 He continued in this pathetic vein.
Rājā Duryodhana,
thinking of his own interest,
advised him:

14 "Tiger among men! Bull among men!
Do not fear.
Who has the power to kill you
who are surrounded by Kṣatriyas?

15 I, Vaikartana-Karṇa, Citrasena,
Viviṁśati,
and Bhūriśravas, Śalya, Śala,
and invincible Vṛṣasena,

16 Purumitra, Jaya, Bhoja,
Sudakṣiṇa, of the Kāmbojas,
Satyavrata, mahā-muscled Vikarṇa,
and Durmukha,

17 Duḥśāsana, Subāhu,
the weapons-brandishing ruler of Kaliṅga,
Vinda and Anuvinda of Avanti, Droṇa,
Aśvatthāman, Śakuni –

18 These and many other brave rulers
from many kingdoms
are here with their soldiers to protect you.
Discard your fear-fever.

19 Besides, you are an unrivalled chariot-hero!
Your radiance is unmatched.
Why are you afraid
of the Pāṇḍavas?

20 My eleven *akṣauhiṇīs* are marshalled
to protect you.
Do not fear, ruler of the Sindhus!
Cast off all fears."

21 And so, O rājā, that night (continued Sañjaya)
encouraged by your son,
the ruler of the Sindhus accompanied Duryodhana
to the camp of Droṇa.

22 O lord of the world! Touching Droṅa's feet
and bowing to him,
Jayadratha humbly sat near him
and asked:

23 "*Bhagavan*, compare me with Arjuna:
in clarity of aim,
in distant shooting, in dexterity,
in strength of stroke.

24 Ācarya, I must know the difference
between myself and Arjuna
in bowcraft skill, I must know this
in exact detail.

25 "Both you and Arjuna," replied Droṇa,
"have identical training.
In yoga and assiduousness,
however, Arjuna excels you.

26 This does not mean you should fear Arjuna
on the battlefield,
I will be there to protect you
from any danger.

27 Whom my arms protect,
even the gods cannot harm.
Even Arjuna cannot baffle the strategy
I will adopt tomorrow.

28 So, do not fear. Fight!
Follow your sva-dharma!
O mahā-chariot-hero,
enhance the glory of your ancestors.

29 You have studied the scriptures,
you have lit the holy fire,
you have performed sacrifices,
you have nothing to fear.

30 If you die, you will attain the realm
fools have difficulty reaching –
you will attain heaven
by strength of arms.

31 The Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas,
the Vṛṣṇi warriors,
others, I, myson – consider them
only too mortal.

32 Only by one, victims at the hands
of Kala,
we will go to the other world,
taking our karma with us.

33 Kṣatriyas, by performing Kṣatriya-dharma,
attain the regions
which ascetics attain by the performance
of strict *tapasyā*."

34 In this manner Bharadvāja's son Droṇa
comforted Jayadratha,
who cast away his fear of Arjuna
and prepared for battle.

35 And the soldiers. O lord of the world (added Sañjaya),
were overjoyed;
they screamed war-cries
which mingled with the din of wardrums.

## SECTION SEVENTY-FIVE

1 Sañjaya continued:
After Dhanañjaya-Arjuna had vowed
to kill the Sindhu rājā,
Vāsudeva-Krishna
advised him, saying:

2 "With your brothers' approval
you have vowed to kill Jayadratha:
'I will kill him tomorrow.'
A rash decision.

3 You did not consult me
when you took this heavy burden.
This will draw upon us
the ridicule of all men.

4 I had planted spies
in the camp of Duryodhana.
They have returned
and supplied me with news.

5 They said; '*Prabhu*! Lord!
After you vowed to kill rājā Jayadratha,
the Kauravas heard the noise
of our war-cries and drums.

6 Frightened, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
and their relatives thought:
*They are planning something.*
So they waited.

7 In the meantime, O strong-armed one,
the Kauravas created a din
with elephants, horses, foot-soldiers
and rattling chariot-wheels.

8 Thinking, *Dhanañjaya-Arjuna has heard
of Abhimanyu's death;
angered, he will attack at night,*
they prepared for battle.'

9 As they prepared for battle,
O lotus-eyed one,
they heard of your firm vow
to kill the Sindhu-rājā.

10 And so upset were Duryodhana's advisers
that they behaved
like a flock of panicking deer.
And rājā Jayadrahta,

11 Ruler of the Sindhus and Sauvīras,
rose sorrow-stricken,
and accompanied by his ministers
retired to his tent.

12 He consulted them
to see what best to do.
Returning to the assembly of rājās,
he said to Duryodhana:

13 'Thinking *He killed my son,*
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna will attack me tomorrow.
He has vowed to kill me
in front of his army.

14 Neither gods nor gandharvas,
neither anti-gods nor serpents,
nor rākṣasas can frustrate
that vow of Savyasācī-Arjuna.

15 Therefore, please protect me!
Plan out a strategy.
Prevent Dhanañjaya-Arjuna from placing his feet
on your heads, and succeeding!

16 O Kuru-delighting Duryodhana,
if you cannot assure my safety,
grant me leave, O rājā,
to return to my home.'

17 Suyodhana-Duryodhana listened and, depressed,
lowered his head.
Realising Jayadratha was terror-stricken,
he remained silent.

18 The Sindhu rājā, seeing Duryodhana
so deeply dejected,
said softly these words,
intended for his own benefit:

19 'You have no archer
to equal Arjuna in bow-skill,
none who can repulse in battle
the weapons of Arjuna

20 Who dares face Arjuna
who wields the Gāṇḍīva
and is helped by Vāsudeva-Krishna?
Not even Indra of a hundred sacrifices.

21 I have heard that long ago
Pārtha-Arjuna, on foot,
challenged mahā-valiant Maheśvara-Śiva himself
on Himavant mountain.

22 Encouraged by Indra,
the rājā of the gods,
Arjuna, riding a single chariot,
killed a thousand Dānavas in Hiraṇyapura.

23 And Kuntī's son is now helped
by sagacious Vāsudeva-Krishna!
He can now destroy the three worlds,
even the gods!

24 So, if you allow me
I will either return home
or seek the protection
of mahātmā Droṇa and his son.'

25 So rājā Duryodhana personally
entreated the ācārya
to protect Jayadratha, by strategically
deploying chariots and horses.

26 Karṇa, Bhūriśravas, invincible Vṛṣasena,
the rājā of the Madras,
Kṛpa and Aśvatthāman –
these six will form the vanguard.

27 A half-chariot half-lotus formation:
in its middle
a needle-sharp striking force
led by Jayadratha.

28 In the middle, the Sindhu rājā
will be well protected.
In bow-skill, in weapons-skill,
prowess, noble birth,

29 These six heroic warriors
are difficult to equal.
Without first crushing them,
you cannot touch Jayadratha.

30 O tiger-among-men, consider well
the strength of these six.
When they are a united force,
they are near invincible.

31 So let us consult our heroic warriors,
ministers and friends,
and decide what should be done
to achieve our aims."

## SECTION SEVENTY-SIX

1 Arjuna said:
"You think those six chariot-heroes
are superior to me.
I think their combined prowess
is not half of mine.

2 You will see, O slayer of Madhu,
how I demolish them
when I confront them with the aim
of killing Jayadratha.

3 In the very presence of Droṇa
and his grieving followers,
I will slice off the head
of the Sindhu rājā.

4 Even if the Sādhyas, Rudras,
Vasus, the twin Aśvins,
the Maruts led by Indra, the Viśvadevas
and other gods,

5 The *pitṛs*, gandharvas, Garuḍa,
the oceans,
the mountains, sky, earth, the quarters
and their guardians,

6 The domestic and wild animals,
all moving and unmoving creatures
unite to protect the Sindhu-rājā,
O Madhusūdana-Krishna,

7 He will not survive my arrows
in tomorrow's battle!
Krishna, I touch the Gāṇḍīva bow
and swear by truth,

8 Keśava-Krishna, that I will first attack
the mahā-archer Droṇa
who has pledged himself to protect
ill-minded, criminal Jayadratha.

9 Suyodhana-Duryodhana thinks the battle
is a dice-game in Droṇa's hands.
I'll attack Droṇa
and reach the Sindhu ruler.

10 Tomorrow you'll see the enemy mahā-bowmen
routed by my *nārāca* arrows,
like mountain-peaks
shattered by lightning-bolts.

11 And streams of blood will gush
from arrow-pierced bodies
of soldiers, elephants and horses
toppled on the ground.

12 My Gāṇḍīva-bow shall shoot arrows,
wind-swift, mind-swift,
in thousands, slaughtering soldiers,
horses and elephants.

13 Tomorrow I will show the weapons,
the terrible missiles,
I have obtained from Yama, Kubera,
Varuṇa, Indra, and Rudra-Śiva.

14 Tomorrow you will see how I pulverize
with my Brāhma-missile
the weapons which are supposed
to protect Jayadratha.

15 Keśava-Krishna, tomorrow you will see
the earth littered
with the heads of rājās decapitated
by my arrows.

16 Tomorrow I will please the carnivores
and rout my enemies;
I will delight my friends
and annihilate the Sindhu ruler.

17 That wicked Sindhu-rājā,
born in a wicked country,
behaving unlike a kinsman,
tomorrow will make his followers mourn.

18 Tomorrow you will see Jayadratha,
who wallowed in luxurious guzzling
and wickedness, felled by my arrows
on the battlefield.

19 Tomorrow, Krishna, I will perform
such wonderful feats
as Suyodhana-Duryodhana has never seen
any archer perform.

20 The Gāṇḍīva bow is divine.
I am a warrior, O Hṛṣikeśa-Krishna.
You are my tiger-brave charioteer.
What cannot I do?

21 *Bhagavan!* Revered one! Through your grace
nothing is beyond me.
Knowing I am invincible,
why do you rebuke me?

22 Like the dark spot in the moon,
like water in the ocean,
Janārdana-Krishna, my vow is final,
it cannot be frustrated.

23 Don't think poorly of my weapons,
don't dismiss
my strong bow and my prowess;
don't belittle Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

24 I will fight, I can't lose,
I will surely win.
I have taken the vow of truth.
Consider Jayadratha as dead.

25 Truth is always with Brahmins,
humility with sādhus;
śrī-prosperity attends *yajñas*,
victory is with Nārāyaṇa."

26 Saying this to Hṛṣikeśa-Kirhna and himself
(continued Sañjaya),
Vāsavi-Arjuna added gravely
to Prabhu Keśava-Krishna:

27 “Krishna, after the night ends,
ready my chanot
with war weapons. A mahā-responsibility
lies ahead of us.”

## SECTION SEVENTY-SEVEN

1 Sañjaya continued:
That whole night, Krishna and Arjuna,
pensive and worried,
sighed like serpents,
unable to get any sleep.

2 Seeing Nara and Nārāyaṇa
sleepless and agitated,
the gods led by Vāsava-Indra wondered:
*What will happen?*

3 Dry, hot, fierce winds
began to blow ominously.
A headless trunk and a mace
blotted the sun.

4 Thunder pealed in a cloudless sky,
lightning flashed.
The mountains, forests and oceans
of the earth trembled.

5 Mahārāja, the *makara*-haunted seas
rumbled;
ocean-going rivers
reversed their flow.

6 The upper and lower lips of chariot-heroes,
elephants and horses throbbed,
presaging cannibalism
in the swelling kingdom of Yama.

7 Animals wailed,
involuntarily passing urine and dung.
Observing these fearful
and horripilating omens,

8 And hearing the terrible vow
of ambidexterous Savyasācī-Arjuna,
all your soldiers, O bull-brave Bharata,
were terrorr-stricken.

9 Meanwhile mahā-muscled Pākaśāsani-Arjuna
said to Krishna:
"You must comfort your sister Subhadrā
and her daughter-in-law.

10 Go, Mādhava-Krishna, console my daughter-in-law
and her friends;
console them with soft words
filled with truth."

11 Sadly Vāsudeva-Krishna went
to the abode of Arjuna
and comforted his sister
grievening over her dead son.

12 "Daughter of the Vṛṣṇi race,"
Vāsudeva-Krishna said,
"do not grieve for your son.
Tell your daughter-in-law
not to grieve either.
Gentle lady,
it is the will of Kāla:
all life perishes.

13 Do not grieve.
Your son was a Kṣatriya,
nobly born, modest.
He died a worthy death.

14 Consider it his good fortune –
a chariot-hero,
his father's equal, attaining the goal
cherished by Kṣatriyas.

15 Defeating his enemies and sending them
to the realm of death,
he is now in the eternal region;
his wish is granted.

16 What virtuous seekers long for
through tapasyā,
brahmacarya and *śruti*,
your young son has attained.

17 You are the mother of a hero,
a hero's wife,
a hero's daughter,
related to a host of heroes.
Sweet lady, do not mourn
his supreme fulfilment.

18 That wicked ruler of the Sindhus,
that boy-killer,
will, with his relatives,
receive the fruit of his crime,

19 For when day breaks, lovely-thighed lady,
the wrong-doer
will not escape Pārtha-Arjuna
though he run to Amarāvatī itself.

20 Forget your grief. Do not weep.
Tomorrow the head of Jayadratha,
severed,
will roll on Samantapañcaka.

21 Following Kṣatriya-dharma,
Abhimanyu has attained
the goal all heroes,
all warriors will attain.

22 Broad-shouldered and strong-armed,
unretreating vanquisher of chariot-heroes,
your son,
lovely-thighed lady,
is now in heaven.
Therefore, give up grief.

23 Obedient to the wishes of his father
and his relatives from his mother's side,
he killed many,
and was himself killed.

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24 Queen, Kṣatriya daughter,
comfort your daughter-in-law.
Cast off grief.
Tomorrow will bring pleasing news.

25 What Arjuna has vowed
will be accomplished.
What your husband has vowed to do
will be done.

26 No humans, no Nāgas,
no rākṣasas, *piśācas,*
no anti-gods or gods
can shelter the rājā
of Sindhu from death
when tomorrow arrives."

## SECTION SEVENTY-EIGHT

1 Sañjaya continued:
These words of mahātmā Keśava-Krishna
made Subhadrā,
sorely distressed over her son,
grieve even more.

2 "Hai! Son of a woebegone mother!
Why did you rush to battle?
How could you die,
O equal of your father?

3 Hai! My son! Was I fated to see
your dark-blue lotus face,
lovely-eyed, shining-teethed,
soiled in the dust?

4 Brave, unretreating hero,
now you lie on the field.
Your handsome head, strong neck,
wide chest, slim waist.

5 Limbs ornamented, enchanting-eyed,
body wound-riddled –
all creatures stare at you
as at the rising moon.

6 You who lay
on luxuriously-covered beds
now must sleep on the bare earth,
pierced with arrows.

7 A strong-armed hero attended
by the loveliest ladies –
now doomed to lie on the battlefield,
surrounded by jackals;

8 And he who was praised
by bards and minstrels
is welcomed now
by horrendously howling flesh-eaters!

9 Who could kill you, my radiant son,
never helpless,
protected by the Pāṇḍavas and Vṛṣṇis
and Pāñcālas?

10 O my perfect son!
I long to look at you.
I am miserable,
I will go to Yama's abode.

11 When will I see that large-eyed,
handsome face of my son again–
so sweet-speaking,
so sweet-smelling?

12 Shame on Arjuna's skill as archer!
Shame on Bhīma!
Shame on the Vṛṣṇi heroes,
and Pāñcāla valour!

13 *Dhik*! Shame on the Kekayas and Cedis,
the Matsyas and Sṛñjayas
who failed to save you
on the battlefield!

14 The world is vacant,
the world has no beauty –
I do not see my son Abhimanyu,
my sight is blurred.

15 You, the son of the wielder
of the Gāṇḍīva,
the heroic son of Vāsudeva's sister –
you, dead?

16 Come to me, my son!
Come to your desolated mother
who thirsts for a look from you.
Come to me, my son;
and sit in my lap
and suck the milk of my breasts.

17 O my heroic son, you were to me
a treasure seen
and lost in dream.
Hai! Life's a fleeting bubble.

18 How will I ever be able to comfort
your young wife,
as forlorn as a cow
that has lost her calf?

19 How I long to see you, my son!
But you left me prematurely,
before getting a chance
to blossom.

20 Uttarā is the finest of her race,
gentle, soft-spoken,
an illustrious daughter-in-law
whom I love.

21 A lovely girl with large eyes,
full-moon face,
supple as a young tree-branch,
graceful-gaited
like an elephant,
lips soft like *bimba*-fruit.
O Abhimanyu, hold her close to you,
make her happy.

22 Aho, dear son, you left me
thirsting for you
even as I savoured the joy
of being a son's mother.

23 I can see how even the wise
 find death mysterious,
for you died helpless
 though Keśava-Krishna was your protector.

24 Those who perform *yajñas,*
 those who give charity,
those Brahmins who discipline themselves.
 who observe
the vow of brahmacarya,
 who bathe in sacred waters,

25 Those who are grateful,
 those devoted to goodness,
those who honour their gurus,
 who offer *dakṣiṇā* –
may you, my son, attain the goal
 they attain.

26 May you attain the goal
 attained by those
who fight without retreating
 and die in battle.

27 May you attain that goal
 attained by those
who gift away a thousand cows,
 who offer liberally at yajñas,
who give away mansions
 pleasing to the recipients.

28 May you attain the goal
 attained by those
who gift gems and jewellery
 to deserving Brahmins,
and who do not unjustly punish
 living creatures.

29 May you attain the goal
 attained by those
who practise brahmacarya,
 and by women who marry only once.

30 Those rājās who abide by virtue,
those who follow
the four ends of life faithfully
and obtain merit –
may that eternal goal
be yours, my son.

31 May you attain the goal
attained by those
who care for the poor and distressed,
who share sweets
equally with dependents,
who never bear ill-will.

32 May you attain the goal
attained by those
who observe vows, practise dharma,
serve gurus and elders,
and never deny hospitality
to guests.

33 May you attain the goal
attained by those
who keep calm
in the midst of calamity.

34 May you attain the goal
attained by those
who cherish their father and mother,
who never seek pleasure
in women other
than their own wives.

35 May you attain the goal
attained by those
who sleep with their wives
at the right times,
and who stay away
from enjoying others' wives.

36 May you attain the goal
attained by those
who see with the eye of peace
and show no malice,
who are forgiving, who deliberately
never hurt others.

37 May you attain the goal
attained by those
who shun money, meat, wine, pride,
lies, and cruelty.

38 May you attain the goal
attained by those
who are modest, tranquil, disciplined,
learned in the śāstras."

39 Sorrowing Subhadrā, grief-stricken,
lamented in this manner.
Draupadī, accompanied by Uttarā,
approached her.

40 O rājā! Wailing inconsolably,
overwhelmed with sorrow,
they collapsed on the ground
like three mad creatures.

41 Krishna comforted them
with speech meant for such grief,
and sprinkled their faces
with cool water.

42 After which lotus-eyed Krishna
said these words to his sister,
who was trembling
as if heart-pierced:

43 "Subhadrā, do not mourn for your son.
Draupadi, comfort Uttara.
Abhimanyu, excellent Ksatriya,
has reached his goal.

44 Lovely-faced lady,
may the living heroes of our race
also attain the goal
attained by illustrious Abhimanyu.

45 All of us, all our allies,
long to achieve in battle
the goal mahā-chariot-hero Abhimanyu
singlehanded attained."

46 Consoling his sister and Draupadī,
the foe-crushing hero,
mahā-muscled Krishna
returned to Pārtha-Arjuna.

47 With the permission of his relatives,
kings, and Arjuna,
Krishna retired to the inner apartments
of Arjuna's abode,
and the other kings, O rājā,
retired to their tents.



## SECTION SEVENTY-NINE

1 Sañjaya continued:
Lotus-eyed Krishna entered
Arjuna's magnificent abode,
touched water,
and on the glistening auspicious floor

2 Spread a beautiful mat
sacred kuśa-grass
the colour of lapis lazuli.
Later, with flower-garlands,
fried paddy
and various auspicious articles,

3 He decorated the mat and placed
splendid weapons around it.
Partha-Arjuna touched water;
devoted servants

4 Performed the nightly ceremony
of propitiating
three-eyed Trayambaka-Śiva,
after which Arjuna, joyfully, lovingly,
with perfumes and garlands,
to Mādhava-Krishna

5 Paid homage,
offering the nightly sacrifice.
Govinda-Krishna smiled
and whispered to Phālguna-Arjuna:

6 “Lie down and sleep, Pārtha.
May you prosper.
I go, seeking your welfare.”
Instructing the sentries,

7 Krishna returned to his tent,
accompanied by Dāruka.
Lying on his pure-white bed,
he made plans.

8 For Pārtha-Arjuna’s sake,
lotus-eyed Bhagavān Krishna started thinking
how best to remove Arjuna’s grief
and re-inspire energy in him.

9 Wrapped in yoga, the Lord of lords,
renowned Viṣṇu who cherished Jiṣṇu,
focused his ātman-power
to benefit Arjuna.

10 No one slept that night
in the Pāṇḍava camp.
O lord of the world,
everyone kept wide awake.

11 *Mahātmā Arjuna, Gāṇḍīva-wielder,*
*plunged in grief*
*over his son’s death,*
*has vowed to kill the Sindhu-rājā.*

12 *Will the mahā-muscled son of Indra,*
*will the foe-crushing hero*
*succeed in his vow?*
they wondered.

13 *Pāṇḍu’s mahātmā son*
*has made a difficult vow.*
*Jayadratha is hugely powerful.*
*Will Arjuna succeed?*

14 *Sorrow-afflicted Arjuna*
*has rashly made this vow.*
*Duryodhana’s brothers are mahā-valiant,*
*his army truly vast.*

15 *Duryodhana has ordered them all*
*to protect Jayadratha.*
*May Dhanañjaya-Arjuna return safe*
*after killing the Saindhava king!*

16 *May Arjuna keep his vow*
*and kill all his enemies!*
*Should he fail to kill the Sindhu rājā,*
*he'll perish in fire.*

17 *Kuntī's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna*
*will never fail his vow.*
*How will Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira become rājā*
*if Arjuna perishes?*

18 *Yudhiṣṭhira has pinned hopes of victory*
*on Arjuna alone.*
*If we have any merits gained*
*by gift and sacrifice,*

19 *May the fruits of these*
*grant victory to Savyasācī-Arjuna!*
*Prabhu!* Lord! Even as they discussed the possibility
of Arjuna's victory,

20 Rājā, that endless night passed.
And Janārdana-Krishna
in the middle of that long night,
suddenly recalling

21 The vow made by Pṛthā-Kuntī's son,
said to Dāruka:
"Agitated by his beloved son's death,
Arjuna has vowed,

22 Dāruka, to kill Jayadratha
before tomorrow's sun sets.
This vow has surely made Duryodhana
consult his advisers

23 On how best to prevent Arjuna
from killing Jayadratha.
Even heroic thousand-eyed Indra,
humbler of Daityas and Dānavas,

24 Cannot harm Jayadratha,
who is protected by Droṇa.
So tomorrow I will do that
by which Kuntī's son Arjuna

25 Can kill Jayadratha tomorrow
before the sun sets.
My wives, my friends, my kinsmen,
and others –

26 None is so dear to me
as Kuntī's son Arjuna.
Without Arjuna, Dāruka,
for one moment even, this world

27 Means nothing to me.
And so I will do it.
Routing them all,
their horses and their elephants,

28 I will kill them,
including Karṇa and Suyodhana-Duryodhana,
for Arjuna's sake.
The three worlds will see my prowess!

29 I will fight tomorrow, Dāruka,
for Arjuna's sake.
Tomorrow the gods and gandharvas, *piśācas*,
serpents, rākṣasas

30 Will see how true a friend I am
of Arjuna.
Who injures him, harms me;
who helps him, helps me.

31 Tomorrow thousands of kings,
hundreds of princes,
with horses, chariots and elephants,
will flee from battle;

32 Tomorrow, Dāruka,
my *cakra* will pulverize their forces,
my wrath will rout them,
and all for Arjuna's sake.

33 Realise, Dāruka,
that Arjuna is half of me.
*Kaumodaki* mace, divine missiles, *cakra,*
bows and arrows –

34 Equip my chariot by the rules
of war science,
and follow me, Dāruka,
at break of day –

35 Not forgetting any war weapons.
See there's room
in the chariot
for my Garuḍa-emblemed banner.

36 Caparison my steeds – Valāhaka, Shaibya,
Meghapuṣpa, Sugrīva –
in sun-like gold trappings,
and yoke my chariot;

37 And ready yourself too
with excellent armour.
The deafening bull-like roar
of my Pāñcajanya conch –

38 When you hear that,
come to me quickly.
In a single day,
the grief of Arjuna

39 I will scatter,
for he is my paternal aunt's son.
I shall so manoeuvre in battle,
that Arjuna

40 Will kill Jayadratha
before the very eyes
of Duryodhana and his brothers.
Whatever Arjuna wishes,

41 I promise victory tomorrow
for Bībhatsu-Arjuna
These is no doubt, O charioteer,
that Arjuna will conquer."

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42 “Victory is his, and never defeat,”
  said Dāruka,
“who has you as his charioteer,
  O tiger-among-men.

43 I will do as you have instructed.
  This night will end
and bring the morning
  with victory for Vijaya-Arjuna.”

## SECTION EIGHTY

1 Sañjaya continued:
Incredibly powerful Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
  Kintī’s son,
thinking of fulfilling his vow,
  recalled the mantras
he had obtained from Vyāsa,
  and slept.

2 Garuḍa-emblemed mahā-energetic Krishna
  appeared in dream
before ape-emblemed Arjuna
  stricken with grief.

3 Because he loved and revered Krishna,
  dharmātmā Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
never failed to rise, advance,
  and greet Krishna.

4 So he stood up in dream,
  welcomed Govinda-Krishna,
offered him a seat,
  without himself sitting.

5 Mahā-energetic Krishna sat down.
  He had insight
into Pārtha-Arjuna’s thoughts,
  so he said to him standing:

6 “Pārtha-Arjuna, don’t succumb to grief.
  Kāla is absolute and invincible.
Kāla propels all creatures
  to inevitable paths.

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7 Excellent Arjuna, tell me:
why this deep grief?
Wise one, discard grief,
it paralyses action.

8 Do what has to be done.
It is your duty, Dhanañjaya.
Grief that paralyses
is a man's greatest enemy.

9 A grief-gripped man
delights his enemies
and hurts his friends.
Grief debilitates. Discard grief."

10 Bībhatsu-Arjuna listened to the words
of Vāsudeva-Krishna.
Invincible and learned Arjuna
replied gravely:

11 "My mahā-vow is a fierce one:
to kill Jayadratha.
Keśava! Tomorrow I will kill
my son's ill-ātmaned murderer.

12 To foil me, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's followers
will station Jayadratha
in the deep rear,
protected by mahā-chariot-heroes.

13 Mādhava-Krishna, their army
of eleven *akṣauhiṇīs,*
onsisting of the brave warriors
who have survived,

14 Will surround him. Krishna,
with mahā-chariot-heroes protecting him,
how will we reach
the ill-ātmaned Jayadratha?

15 Keśava, I fear I shall be unable
to keep my vow.
If that happens, what reason is there
for me to live?

16 It is this fear of failure
that causes my grief.
At this time of the year,
the sun sets quickly."

17 Best of the twice-born Dvijaketana-Krishna
heard Pārtha-Arjuna,
touched water, and sat down,
facing the east.

18 Then lotus-eyed
and mahā-energetic Krishna
said these sage words
to the vow-committed son of Pāṇḍu:

19 "Son of Pṛthā-Kuntī!
There is an eternal infallible weapon
called Pāśupata with which Maheśvara-Śiva
routed the Daityas.

20 If you can summon that missile,
Jayadratha will die.
Focus your mind
on the bull-emblemed deity Śiva;

21 Concentrate your mind-energy
and commune with him, Dhanañjaya.
His grace will grant the mahā-missile
to you, his *bhakta.*"

22 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna listened, touched water,
and, sitting on the ground,
paid homage to Śiva
in total concentration.

23 Deep in meditation,
Arjuna saw himself and Keśava-Krishna
roaming the skies
at the auspicious Brahma-dawn.

24 He saw himself transported
with wind-swiftness
among Siddhas and Cāraṇas
on begemmed Himālayan peaks.

25 He and Keśava-Krishna
soared high in the skies.
Krishna was holding
Arjuna's right hand.

26 Dharmātmā Arjuna witnessed
many incredible sights,
and towards the north he saw
the White Mountain.

27 He saw the lovely lotus lake
in Kubera's garden.
He saw the river-rich Gaṅgā,
finest of rivers.

28 Crystals and shining pebbles,
perennially flowering and fruiting trees;
lions and tigers everywhere;
and other animals –

29 All in the vicinity of Mandara hill –
soothing āshrams;
glittering birds;
slopes echoing with Kinnara songs.

30 Golden peaks and silver peaks;
medicinal herbs
and dazzling flowers multi-shaped,
multi-coloured.

31 Then the mountain of Kāla
like a heap of collyrium;
then the Brahmatuṅga peak,
and river on river
gracefully sweeping
through plain after plain.

32 The woods of Śaryāti,
unique Śataśrṅga,
the sanctified spot
of Aśvaśira,
and the place associated
with Ātharvaṇa ṛṣi.

33 The Vṛṣadaṁśa mountain,
 and the Mahā-mandra mountain,
inhabited by apsarās
 and Kinnaras.

34 Roaming on that mountain
 with Krishna,
Arjuna saw hot springs and gold
 and other minerals

35 Blazing with sun-dazzle
 and lambent moon-glow;
towns and cities,
 teeming with rich mines.

36 Traversing earth, sky, inter-space,
 spellbound Arjuna came to Viṣṇupada,
with Krishna,
 travelling swift as an arrow.

37 There an incandescent mountain
 greeted his eyes,
radiant with planet-, star-,
 moon- and sun-fire.

38 On that hill he saw the mahātmā
 tapasyā-practising Deity
whose banner is the bull,
 sitting on the peak.

39 He flamed with the radiance
 of a thousand suns;
in his hand was the trident;
 on his head matted locks;
his dress tiger-skin and tree-bark
 on milk-white skin.

40 His body was blazing
 with thousand-eyed glory,
enchanting to see;
 beside him were seated
his Pārvatī śakti
 and radiant deities.

41 They danced, his attendants,
they sang and they laughed,
they clapped and they shrieked;
they played
varied instruments of music
with wild gesticulations.

42 There Arjuna beheld
the undecaying god
who brandishes the bow,
who protects all creatures,
who is praised by the sages
and the chanters of Vedas.

43 Dharmātmā Vāsudeva-Krishna and Pārtha-Arjuna,
seeing the Brahma-Sanātana-Deity,
touched the earth with their heads,
and chanted the Vedas.

44 The yoni of the worlds,
the Creator uncreated,
the unfading Īśvara,
the Creator of mind,
who is space, who is wind,
the source of all light,

45 The Creator of rain,
the root of the earth,
the Creator of the gods,
and Yakṣas and Dānavas
and human as well,
the goal of their worship,

46 The Brahmā attained
by meditating yogis,
the shelter of those
who revere the scriptures,
Creator-Destroyer
of living-unliving,

47 Mahātmā Kāla
whose anger destroys
at the end of a yuga,
Śakra-Indra and Sūrya, –
with mind, speech, thought, deed,
Krishna adored him.

48 And Krishna and Arjuna
desired the grace
of the birthless Deity
whom the learned adore
when they seek the fulfilment
of spiritual longings.

49 Again and again
the uncreated Deity,
the origin of creatures,
the cause of the past,
the present and future.
was worshipped by Arjuna.

50 Seeing Arjuna and Krishna,
Nara-Nārāyaṇa,
standing before him,
Śarva-Śiva, delighted,
said to them, smiling,
these inspiring words:

51 "Best among men, you are welcome.
Arise,
and shed the fatigue of your journey.
What do you wish?

52 What brings you all the way here?
I will grant it.
Ask any boon that will benefit you.
It shall be granted."

53 Hearing these words of Śiva,
Krishna and Arjuna rose,
did *añjali*;
learned, faultless, they praised Śarva-Śiva,

54 The mahātmā deity, with bhakti
in the form of lyrical hymns.

55 Krishna and Arjuna said:
"Homage to Bhava
to Śarva
to boon-granting Rudra
to the lord of creatures
to the matted-haired deity!

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56 Homage to Mahā-deva
to the awesome deity
to the three-eyed lord Trayambaka
to the granter of peace
Homage to Īśāna
to the slayer of Andhāka
to the humbler of pride!

57 Homage to the father of Kumara
to the blue-throated deity
to the Pināka-wielder
to the *havana*-receiver
Homage to the god
of truth and prosperity!

58 Homage to the deity
who is red-skinned and tawny
who roams as the hunter
who cannot be defeated
Homage to the blue-haired god
the wielder of the trident
the celestial-visioned!

59 Homage to the three-eyed deity
who preserves and destroys
who is disease and blight
and the energy of fire itself!
Homage to the inconceivable one
the lord of goddess Ambikā
whom all the gods revere!

60 Homage to the bull-bannered god
whose head is shaven
who has matted hair
who practises brahmacarya
who does tapasayā in the waters
who is Brahmā-devoted and unvanquished!

61 Homage to the deity
who is the ātman of the universe
the creator of the universe
the pervader of the universe
Homage to him again and again
*Namo namaste!*
Homage to the lord of life!

62 Homage to the deity
in whose mouth resides Brahmā!
Homage to Śaṅkara-Śiva
who assures the welfare of all!
Homage to the lord of the universe
and the lord of all creatures!

63 Homage to the lord of speech,
to the protector of all,
to the multi-headed and multi-armed,
to the god who is Death personified.

64 Homage to deity
who is thousand-eyed and thousand-legged
Homage to the deity
of countless deeds
whose complexion is golden
whose armour is golden
who blesses his devotees!
Homage to him
who grants us favours!"

65 Sañjaya continued:
With these praises of Mahādeva,
Vāsudeva-Krishna and Arjuna
pleased and propitiated him
to obtain the weapon.

### SECTION EIGHTY-ONE

1 Sañjaya continued:
And Pārtha-Arjuna with a joyful ātman
and awe-filled eyes
did *añjali* to the bull-bannered god
of wondrous energy.

2 He saw lying by the side
of the three-eyed god
all the offerings he made to Vāsudeva-Krishna
every night.

3 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna mentally adored
Krishna and Śarva-Śiva,
and said to Śaṅkara-Śiva,
"I desire the divine missile."

4 Hearing Pārtha-Arjuna's words
which disclosed Arjuna's desire,
Śiva smiled and said
to Vāsudeva-Krishna and Arjuna:

5 "Finest of men, you are welcome.
I know your wish.
I will grant the desire
for which you have come.

6 Foe-destroying heroes,
not far from here is a lake of nectar.
A long time ago,
I kept my bow and arrows there.

7 I killed all the foes of the anti-gods
with these weapons.
Go there, you twin Krishnas,
and bring the bow and arrows."

8 Saying "So be it", the two heroes
proceeded to the many-marvelled
lake of *amṛta*.

9 Fearlessly the Nara-Nārāyaṇa ṛṣis
made their way
to the sacred wish-fulfilling lake
indicated by Śiva.

10 Arjuna and undeteriorating Açyuta-Krishna
went to the lake
and saw in that sun-maṇḍala dazzle
a fierce serpent.

11 They saw a second serpent there,
thousand-hooded and fire-flaming,
vomiting gusts
of fiery breath.

12 Krishna and Pārtha-Arjuna touched water,
did *añjali*
before the bull-bannered god Śiva
and approached the snakes.

13 Being wise in the Vedas,
they chanted a hundred mantras
in praise of Rudra,
and devotedly adored Śiva.

14 Under the spell of the mantras
in praise of Rudra-Śiva,
shedding their mahā-snake-forms,
the snakes became bow and arrow.

15 Mahātmā Krishna and Arjuna
took the two weapons
which shone divinely
and gave them to Śiva.

16 From Śiva's body sprang
a pink-eyed, tapasyā-rich *brahmacārī*,
blue-throated, red-haired,
radiating energy.

17 Taking that marvellous bow,
he stood in archer's pose;
stringing the bow taut,
he fitted the arrow.

18 Puissant Pāṇḍava-Arjuna observed
the manner of standing,
stretching, stringing, mantra-intoning,
and learnt it well.

19 The powerful *brahmācārī*
shot an arrow
into the lake, and threw the bow
into the lake.

20 Sharp-memoried Arjuna,
knowing Bhava-Śhiva was pleased with him,
recalled the darshan and boon
Śankara-Śiva gave him in the forest,

21 With total recall he desired all this
to come true:
*May this fructify!* Bhava-Śiva read his mind,
and granted the boon,

22 Along with the fearsome Pāśupata weapon
and the fulfilment of Arjuna's vow.
Obtaining the celestial weapon
again from Śiva,

23 Invincible Arjuna horripilated,
confident of his vow.
Elated, Krishna and Arjuna
bowed their heads before Maheśvara-Śiva.

24 Their boon granted, Keśava-Krishna and Arjuna,
filled with joy,
returned almost immediately
to their own camp.

25 Their joy equalled the joy
of Indra and Viṣṇu
when, after obtaining Bhava-Śiva's boon,
they killed the mahā-antigod Jambha.

## SECTION EIGHTY-TWO

1 Sañjaya continued:
While Krishna and Dāruka were talking,
the night passed, O rājā.
At break of dawn,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira rose from his bed.

2 Magadhas and Vaitālikas and Sūtas
with auspicious chants woke him,
and minstrels melodiously
sang the praises of bull-brave Yudhiṣṭhira

3 Dancers danced, and singers sang.
Exquisite voices
recounted the glories
of the Kaurava dynasty.

4 *Mṛdaṅgas, jharharas and bheris,*
*paṇavas, ānakas,*
*gomukhas,* ādambaras, conches,
mahā-sonorous *dundubhis* –

5 These and many other instruments,
O Bharata,
were played by skilled performers
with ecstatic artistry.

6 The cloud-rumbling sound-medley
reached the sky
and woke the finest of earth-rulers
from soothing sleep.

7 Yudhiṣṭhira rose from gentle sleep
in a soft bed,
and proceeded to perform
his morning ablutions.

8 One hundred and eight servants,
young and elegant,
dressed in white, brought water
in brimming golden jars.

9 Comfortably seated,
dressed in a fine-textured robe,
the king bathed in mantra-purified,
sandalwood-sweet water.

10 Professionally trained attendants massaged
his limbs with medicinal water,
later washing him
with scented water.

11 With a long strip of cloth
as pure white as royal swan's feathers,
he wrapped his head
to dry his hair.

12 Smearing his body with the paste
of *hari*-sandalwood,
in a spotless robe, he sat in *prāñjali*,
facing the east.

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13 Kuntī's son, following the good path,
intoned the proper prayers,
and humbly entered
the sacred fire chamber.

14 Worshipping the sacred fire
with two *kuśa* sticks,
and chanting mantras,
he emerged from the chamber.

15 That tiger-among-men then entered
a second chamber
where he saw many incomparable
Veda-versed bull-brave Brahmins,

16 All highly disciplined,
one thousand and eight of them,
their ablutions completed.
With them were a thousand disciples.

17 Offering them *akṣata*-flowers, honey,
ghee, holy fruits,
strong-armed Yudhiṣṭhira
obtained their clear-intoned blessings,

18 After which he gave to each
a golden coin,
a hundred gold-caparisoned horses
and excellent robes.

19 He gave them milch cows
of the *kapilā* breed,
with calves, their horns and hooves
decorated with gold and silver;
having done so,
he did *pradakṣiṇa*.

20 Auspicious svastikas, golden goblets,
garlands, jars of water, saced *hutāśana*-fires,

21 Vessels filled with sun-dried rice,
cow-urine pigment,
exquisitely ornamented virgins,
curd and ghee, honey and water,

22 Auspicious birds,
and other objects considered holy –
seeing and touching them,
Kaunteya-Yudhiṣṭhira stepped outside.

23 Attendants seated maha-muscled Yudhiṣṭhira
on a throne made of gold,
auspiciously symbolled
with lapis lazuli,

24 Crafted by the celestial artificer
Viśvakarman,
and covered with a precious carpet
of superfine texture.

25 After mahātmā Yudhiṣṭhira
had seated himself on it,
his attendants brought many expensive,
dazzling ornaments.

26 Mahārāja, such was the glory
of pearl-adorned
mahātmā Yudhiṣṭhira
as to excite his foes' jealousy.

27 Fanned with gold-handled yak-tails
whose brightness outshone the moon's,
the cloud-king flashed
with lightning-lustre.

28 The delighter of the Kuru race
was praised by all –
by mistrels with chants,
by gandharvas with songs.

29 In no time at all
the sounds were drowned
by the mahā-clatter of chariot-wheels
and horses' hooves,

30 And the tinklings of bells
on the necks of elephants,
and conch-blasts and troops marching.
The earth trembled.

31 At that very moment,
bowing his head low and kneeling,
one of the attendants
guarding the doors,

32 A youth clad in armour,
shining with ear-rings,
sword at his waist, offered homage
to dharmātmā Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira,

33 Declaring that he had come to announce
Krishna's arrival.
Tiger-brave Yudhiṣṭhira welcomed Krishna,
enquiring after his welfare.

34 Ordering his attendants to offer *arghya*
and bring a seat,
dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
welcomed Mādhava-Krishna
and, after seating him,
offered him his deepest pūjā-respect.

## SECTION EIGHTY-THREE

1 Sañjaya continued:
Kuntī's son rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
welcomed Janārdana-Krishna,
Devakī's son,
and cheerfully said

2 "Did you pass the night happily,
Madhusūdana-Krishna?
Have all your senses been soothed and gratified,
Acyuta-Krishna?

3 Vāsudeva-Krishna enquired after Yudhiṣṭhira
in similar terms.
An attendant announced other Kṣatriyas
were waiting outside.

4 With the permission of the rājā,
the attendant ushered in many heroes:
Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Virāṭa,
Bhīma, Sātyaki,

5 The Cedi ruler Dhṛṣṭaketu,
the mahā-chariot hero Drupada,
Śikhaṇḍin, Nakula, Sahadeva,
Cekitāna the Kekaya prince,

6 Yuyutsu of the Kauravas,
Uttamaujas of the Pāñcālas,
Yudhāmanyu, Subāhu,
and Draupadī's five sons.

7 And many other Kṣatriyas as well
approached that bull-brave Kṣatriya,
and sat down
on auspicious seats.

8 The mahā-powerful mahātma heroes,
Krishna and Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
both of mahā-radiant fame,
occupied a single seat.

9 Within the hearing of the assembly,
king Yudhiṣṭhira
said these sweet words
to lotus-eyed Madhusūdana-Krishna:

10 "Like the gods who depend
on thousand-eyed Indra,
we depend on you for victory
and eternal happiness.

11 Krishna, you know of our deprivation
of our kingdom,
our exile by our enemies,
and our other sufferings.

12 O Lord of all creatures,
Madhusūdana,
you who are merciful
to your numerous *bhaktas*,
our joy is in your hands,
our very existence.

13 O Vṛṣṇi descendent,
act in a way
so we always adore you!
Act in a manner
ensuring fulfilment
of Arjuna's vow!

14 O Madhava, help us
traverse this ocean
of anguish and anger.
O Mādhava,
be like a boat to us crossing
this ocean of pain.

15 Krishna, in battle a chariot-hero,
to kill his enemy,
may be less capable
than his skilful charioteer.

16 O mahā-muscled Janārdana,
you saved the Vṛṣṇis –
save us also from the ruin
that faces us.

17 Wielder of conch-
and-*cakra*-and-mace,
be a boat to the Pāṇḍavas
who are lost in the deep
and boatless ocean
of Kaurava brutality.

18 *Namaste*!
O God of gods,
eternal enemy-destroyer,
Viṣṇu and Jiṣṇu,
Hari, Vaikuṇṭha,
Puruṣottama!

19 It was Nārada who said,
O Sārṅga-wielder,
super-excelling Mādhava,
that you were the boon-
granting Purāṇa-ṛṣi!
Make his words come true!"

20 Replying to these words
of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
lotus-eyed Krishna
in a voice that boomed
like rain-rumbling clouds,
announced in the gathering:

21 "There is none in the worlds,
even among the gods,
who can wield a bow
with the skill of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

22 He has energy,
he is skilled in all weapons,
he is brave, mahā-powerful,
alert and committed,
indeed he's the finest
of excellent warriors.

23 Besides, he is young,
he is long-amed,
he has the build of a bull,
he walks like a lion;
he's the handsome hero
who will vanquish your foes.

24 As for me, I will arrange so
that Kuntī's son Arjuna
will consume Duryodhan's army
as fire consumes wood.

25 Today, with his arrows
brave Arjuna will make
Abhimanyu's slayer,
barbaric Jayadratha,
travel the path
of no return.

26 Vultures, hawks, vicious jackals
and other flesh-eating animals
will feast today
on Jayadratha.

27 If the gods led by Indra
decide to protect
Jayadratha today,
he will still be killed,
sped to the capital
of the kingdom of Yama.

28 Having slain Jayadratha,
Jiṣṇu-Arjuna
will come before you.
Discard grief, O rājā,
dismiss all despair,
for you will prosper."

## SECTION EIGHTY-FOUR

1 Sañjaya continued:
While they were still talking,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna arrived,
hoping to meet rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
and other relatives.

2 He entered the auspicious hall,
and *praṇāma-ed* bull-brave Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira,
who stood up and affectionately
embraced him.

3 Hugging him warmly,
he smelt the crown of his head,
blessed him,
smiled and said:

4 "Maha-victory will surely by yours, Arjuna.
Your appearance assures me,
and the fact that Janārdana-Krishna
is pleased with you."

5 Jiṣṇu-Arjuna related the wonderful experience
of his dream,
saying, "I have been blessed
by Keśava-Krishna's grace."

6 To reassure his kinsmen and friends,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna recounted in detail
his dream-meeting
with three-eyed Trayambaka-Śiva.

7 Wonder-struck, they touched the earth
with their heads;
namaskāra-ing, they exclaimed, "*Sādhu*! *Sādhu*!
Excellent! Excellent!"

8 With Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira's permission,
the Pāṇḍavas and their friends
rushed excitedly
to the battlefield.

9 Joyfully taking their leave of Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
Acyuta-Krishna and Arjuna,
the rājās filed out of the room
of Yudhiṣṭhira.

10 The two illustrious warriors,
Janārdana-Krishna and Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
riding the same chariot,
proceeded to Arjuna's abode.

11 There Hṛṣikeśa-Krishna adorned and equipped,
as a charioteer,
the ape-bannered chariot
of heroic Arjuna.

12 The cloud-rumbling chariot,
glittering like heated gold,
when equipped,
shone like the dazzling morning sun.

13 Tiger-among-men mail-clad Krishna
informed Pārtha-Arjuna
who had finished his prayers
that the chariot was ready.

14 Finest-of-all-the-world's men Kirīṭin-Arjuna,
diadem-decked,
in golden armour, did *pradakṣiṇa*
around his chariot.

15 Honoured and blessed
with victory-boons by Brahmins
old in years, full of tapasyā,
versed in rituals,
and totally disciplined,
Arjuna climbed into his mahā-chariot,

16 The same chariot which dazzled
like the sun on eastern hills,
and had been purified
by mantras.

17 Adorned with gold ornaments,
finest of chariot-heroes Arjuna
dazzled as he stepped
inside his chariot
like the incandescent sun
on Meru mountain.

18 After Pārtha-Arjuna, Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
and Janārdana-Krishna ascended the chariot
like the twin Aśvins with Indra
at Saryāti's yajña.

19 Finest-of-charioteers Krishna
fingered the reins
like Mātali driving Vāsava-Indra's horses
to kill Vṛtra.

20 With Sātyaki and Krishna
seated in his chariot,
Arjuna looked like the brilliant moon
scattering darkness
when it rises in conjunction
with Budha and Śukra.

21 Slayer-of-hosts-of-foes Arjuna
who had vowed
to kill Jayadratha,
drove to the battlefield
like Indra, with Ambupati-Varuṇa and Mitra,
going to slay Tāraka.

22 Bards and musicians greeted valiant Arjuna
as he proceeded,
with auspicious, excellently worded
songs and music.

23 The songs of bards
and blessings of musicians,
and the auspicious greetings
pleased the heroes.

24 A fragrant auspicious breeze
began to blow
behind Pārtha-Arjuna, inspiring him,
and dispiriting his foes.

25 O gracious monarch, at that instant
innumerable auspicious omens
were seen, portending victory
for the Pāṇḍavas
and indicating defeat for the army
of your son.

26 Seeing those good omens,
Arjuna said to Sātyaki, the mahā-archer,
who was seated
on his right:

27 "Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki, the auspicious omens
that I see, O bull-brave Śini,
assure me that victory will be mine
in today's battle.

28 Take me therefore to where
the Sindhu ruler Jayadratha
is waiting to enter
the realm of Yama.

29 It is essential
that I kill Jayadratha;
it is equally essential
that I protect Dharmarāja-Yudhiṣṭhira

30 Therefore, mahā-muscled one, I entrust
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira's protection to you,
then he is as safe
as if protected by me.

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31 I can see none who can defeat
you in battle,
not even lord-of-gods Indra himself,
for you are Vāsudeva-Krishna's equal.

32 Entrusting the safety of Yudhiṣṭhira in your hands,
O bull-brave hero,
or in Pradyumna's, I can concentrate
on killing Saindhava-Jayadratha.

33 Do not have the least anxiety on my account,
O Sātvata hero.
Your duty is to protect rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
without fail.

34 Where mahā-muscled Vāsudeva-Krishna is,
where I am,
is no danger.
Nothing can go wrong there."

35 Foe-slaying Sātyaki listened
to Pārtha-Arjuna's words;
saying, "So be it,"
he went to protect Yudhiṣṭhira rājā.

## SECTION EIGHTY-FIVE

Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:

1 "What did the grief-stricken Pāṇḍavas do
the day after
Abhimanyu was killed?
Which Kauravas fought them?

2 Since they were aware
of ambidexterous Arjuna's prowess,
how could the Kauravas, having done wrong,
remain fearless?

3 How could they even dare to look
at tiger-brave Arjuna,
incensed at his son's slaughter,
rushing like Antaka-Death personified?

4 What did my soldiers do,
  seeing ape-emblemed Arjuna,
infuriated by his son's slaughter,
  brandishing his massive bow?

5 Sañjaya, what happened to Duryodhana
  in today's battle?
Mahā-ruin faces us. I hear no joyful sounds
  from our camp.

6 Those mind-pleasing sounds
  I heard earlier
from the camp of the Sindhu rājā,
  I hear no more.

7 I do not hear the bards and minstrels
  singing praises,
I do not hear the sounds of dancers
  from our camp.

8 Earlier I was used to hearing them
  all the time.
They must all be plunged in grief,
  to be so silent.

9 Earlier, Sañjaya,
  I heard these delightful sounds
while sitting in the camp
  of truth-firm Somadatta.

10 How empty of religious merit I am –
  to witness
the camp of my sons
  devoid of joy and life!

11 I do not hear the sounds
  I used to hear earlier
in the camps of Viviṁśati, Citrasena,
  Durmukha, Vikarṇa,

12 And other sons – including Droṇa's son,
  the mahā-archer
who protects my sons,
  whom Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas respect,

13 Who is brilliant in argument
and loves conversation,
sings beautifully and plays inspiringly
on musical instruments,

14 And is revered by Kauravas, Pāṇḍavas,
and Sātvatas.
Charioteer, I hear no sounds
from his camp either.

15 So many singers and dancers
waited on Droṇa's son,
that great archer!
Not one sound is heard today.

16 The loud sounds that came
from the camp
of Vinda and Anuvinda are silent.
The Kekaya camp

17 No longer resounds
with the singing and clapping
of celebrating soldiers
indulging in mahā-riotous revelry.

18 The chants of *yājaka* Brahmins
who performed sacrifices
for the Veda-versed son of Somadatta
are not heard either.

19 Bow-twang, Veda-chant, arrow-hiss,
sword-swish
and chariot-rattle are heard no more
from Droṇa's camp.

20 The melody of songs of many lands
mingling with the harmony
of musical instruments on the field
is heard no more.

21 When, out of kindness,
wishing the well-being of all,
Janārdana-Krishna came here
to make peace,

22 I said then to stubborn Duryodhana:
'Son, Acyuta-Krishna is the mediator.
Make peace now
with the Pāṇḍavas.

23 This is the right time, my son.
Don't disobey me, Duryodhana.
If you reject now
Keśava-Krishna's peace terms

24 Who is offering them for your welfare,
victory will never be yours.'
But Duryodhana refused
Dāśārha-Krishna's offer

25 Which was made in all sincerity,
and so invited his own ruin.
He fell in the clutches
of Karṇa,
Duḥśāsana and wicked-minded Śakuni,
and spurned mahā-muscled Krishna.

26 Completely misguided,
pulled into the jaws of Kāla,
he rejected me, and listened to Karṇa
and Duḥśāsana.

27 I neither desired nor approved the dice-game,
nor did Bhīṣma;
nor did Vidura, nor Jayadratha
the Sindhu-ruler.

28 Śalya, Bhūriśravas, Purumitra, Jaya,
Aśvatthāman, Kṛpa and Drona –
none of them, Sañjaya,
approved of it.

29 Had my son cared to follow
their advice,
he, his friends and relatives
would have enjoyed peace.

30 'Pāṇḍu's sons will enjoy happiness –
they are noble,
soft and sweet-speaking, learned,
loved by all.

31 The follower of dharma obtains happiness
always and everywhere;
after he dies, he obtains the joy
of divine grace.

32 The self-reliant Pāṇḍavas
deserve to enjoy
half of the earth.
It is their ancestral right.

33 The Pāṇḍavas will base their authority
on dharma.
I have many relatives whose advice
they will follow.

34 Śalya, for instance, and Somadatta,
mahātmā Bhīṣma,
Droṇa and Vikarṇa, Bāhlīka
and Kṛpa,

35 And many other mahatma elders
of the Bharata race.
*Tāta*! Son, if they speak for me,
the Pāṇḍavas will listen to them.

36 And will anyone of these
ever speak otherwise?
Krishna abides by dharma;
the Pāṇḍavas obey him.

37 And if I speak dharma to them,
they will listen.
It cannot be otherwise –
the Pāṇḍavas are dharmātmās.'

38 I pleaded, I lamented, O Sūta Sañjaya,
before my son.
The fool did not listen –
his mind was warped by Kāla.

39 Vṛkodara-Bhīma, Arjuna, the Vṛṣṇi hero Sātyaki,
Uttamaujas of the Pāñcālas, brave Yudhāmanyu,

40 Invincible Dhṛṣṭadyumna, unbeaten Śikhaṇḍin,
The Aśmakas, Kekayas, the Somaka Kṣatradharman,

41 The Cedi ruler, Cekitana, the Kāśi prince Abibhū,
Draupadī's sons, Virāṭa-chariot-hero Drupada,

42 The twins Nakula and Sahadeva, counsellor,
Madhusūdana Krishna –
Which man wishing to survive would fight them?

43 Who will dare face my enemies
when they brandish celestial weapons,
except Duryodhana, Karṇa,
and Śakuni,

44 And Duḥśāsana the fourth – I see no fifth.
They who have mail-clad Viśvaksena-Krishna in
their chariot,

45 Who have Arjuna on their side,
cannot lose.
Does Duryodhana now recall
my sorrowful words?

46 You tell me, 'Tigers-among-men
Bhīṣma and Droṇa are dead.'
My foolish sons surely
are grief-stricken,

47 Realising that far-seeing Vidura's words
have come true.
My foolish sons must now
be sorely lamenting,

48 Seeing Arjuna and Śaini-Sātyaki harassing
their army,
lamenting when they see
their chariots empty.

49 And Arjuna must be consuming my troops
like a wind-fanned fire
reducing sun-dried straw
to summery ash.

50 Sañjaya, you are expert in story-telling.
Tell me all that happened,
after that outrage against Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
that evening.

51 What did you feel, *tāta*, my son,
after killing Abhimanyu?
Will you be able to endure the valour
of the Gāṇḍīva-wielder

52 After the crime of slaughtering
his son?
What strategy did Duryodhana
and Karṇa adopt?

53 *Tāta*! Dear Sañjaya! What did Duḥśāsana plan
since he too was involved?
Whatever happened was the result
of Duryodhana's misdeeds.

54 He is avaricious, his judgment
is clouded by anger,
his ātman is twisted,
he thirsts for power,
he is stupid.
Sañjaya, tell me:
what he planned –
was it justified, or not?"

## SECTION EIGHTY-SIX

Sañjaya said:

1 "With my eyes I saw all.
I will tell you all.
Listen to me patiently.
You were greatly at fault.

2 Your lamentation is as useless
as a dam built
after the floods have receded.
O bull-brave Bharata rājā, do not grieve.

3 The ways of Destiny
are wonderful and inevitable
O bull-brave Bharata, cast off grief.
What's destined, will happen.

4 If you had long ago stopped
Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
and your sons from gambling,
this would not have happened.

5 If, before the start of battle,
you had restrained
both the enraged parties,
this disaster could have been averted.

6 If you had permitted the other Kauravas
to restrain Duryodhana,
this disaster
would not be yours now.

7 Now the Pāṇḍavas, Pāñcālas,
Vṛṣṇis and others
must suffer the consequences
of your muddle-headedness.

8 If you, as a dutiful father,
had compelled Duryodhana,
to follow the path of dharma,
this calamity would not be yours now.

9 The world thinks you are wise.
Yet, discarding Eternal Dharma,
you listened to Duryodhana,
Karṇa and Śakuni.

10 You are lost in self-interest, O rājā.
Your grief seems to me
to be a strange mix
of honey and poison.

11 There was a time
when Acyuta-Krishna respected you
more than he respected Pāṇḍava-Yudhiṣṭhira,
Bhīṣma and Droṇa.

12 But when Acyuta-Krishna realised you had departed
from the dharma of a rājā,
he stopped respecting you
as he did.

13 You wanted the kingdom for your sons.
You remained indifferent
to their insults to Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons.
Now you must pay the price.

14 That kingdom now is in peril.
O faultless one! It can be yours
only if the Pāṇḍavas, after victory,
give it to you.

15 King Pāṇḍu extended the fame
of the ancestral Kurus;
his dharma-following sons
added to the glory of the kingdom.

16 All their efforts became fruitless
because of you.
Your greed deprived them
of their ancestral kingdom.

17 Your majesty, it is strange indeed
that, at war's doorstep,
you suddenly start finding fault
with your son's actions.

18 Kṣatriya rājās on the battlefield
are not worried
about saving their skins;
they will fight to the end.

19 Indeed, who but the Kauravas
would dare fight an army
led by Krishna, Arjuna,
Sātyaki and Vṛkodara-Bhīma?

20 Who have Guḍākeśa-Arjuna as warrior,
who have Janārdana-Krishna as counsellor,
who have Vṛkodara-Bhīma and Sātyaki
as protectors –

21 Which wielders of the bow
will dare to face them
except the death-dharma-doomed Kauravas
and their fanatic followers?

22 Whatever is expected from Kṣatriyas
dedicated to their dharma
has been provided by the devoted followers
of the Kauravas.

23 Let me now tell you all
that happened in the fierce battle
between the Kauravas
and the tiger-brave Pāṇḍavas."

## SECTION EIGHTY-SEVEN

Sañjaya continued:

1 The night passed;
Droṇa, finest of warriors,
made arrangements
for his army's stategic deployment.

2 O rājā! Fierce shouts!
Screamed challenges!
Anger-inflamed heroes
Eager to kill each other!

3 Stretching of bows!
Nocking of bow-strings!
Rubbing of bow-strings!
Heavy breathing!
"Where is Dhanañjaya-Arjuna?"

4 Some flung their swords up –
Naked, shining, sky-blue swords,
Razor-sharp,
With ornamented hilts.

5 Thousands of battle-eager warriors
Performed intricate manoeuvres
With swords and bows
With disciplined dexterity.

6 Others whirled their bell-decked maces,
Sandalpaste-smeared,
Gold-and-diamond-decorated,
Asking, "Where is Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna?"

7 Other warriors, proud, strong-armed,
Obscured the sky with piked clubs
Like a flag-forest uplifted
In honour of Indra.

8 Still others,
Sporting lovely flower-garlands
And brandishing various weapons.
Took up positions on the battlefield,
Eager to fight.

9 "Where is Arjuna?
Where is Govinda-Krishna?
Where is proud Vṛkodara-Bhīma?
Where their friends and followers?"
With such shouts
They challenged the Pāṇḍavas.

10 Blowing his conch
And driving at full speed,
Droṇa wove in and out of the ranks,
Preparing for battle.

11 Mahārāja, positioning
all the battle-eager warriors,
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa
said to Jayadratha:

12 "You, Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas,
mahā-chariot-hero Karṇa,
Aśvatthāman, Śalya, Vṛṣasena,
and Kṛpa,

13 Supported by a force
of a hundred thousand horses,
sixty thousand chariots,
fourteen thousand rut-streaming elephants,

14 Twenty-one thousand mail-clad foot-soldiers –
march!
Station yourself behind me
at a distance of six *kroṣas*.

15 King of the Sindhus,
even the gods led by Vāsava-Indra himself,
will not be able to touch you –
let alone the Pāṇḍavas."

16 Sindhu-rājā Jayadratha took heart
from this assurance.
With many Gāndhāra mahā-chariot-heroes,
he marched as advised,

17 Together with countless mail-clad,
noose-armed foot-soldiers.
Gold-ornamented
and decked with yak-tail fly-whisks,

18 Jayadratha's horses formed, O Indra-among-rājās,
a fine and formidable force;
he had seven thousand such,
and three thousand Sindhu steeds.

19 Driven by expert elephant-riders,
gigantic rut-streaming elephants,
fully covered with mail,
famed for fearful exploits –

20 One thousand five hundred such
supported the ranks
of your eager-to-do-battle son
Durmarṣaṇa.

21 Two of your other sons –
Duḥśāsana and Vikarṇa –
headed the front ranks,
to protect the Sindhu rājā.

22 The part-wedge and part-circle
battle-formation of Bhāradvāja-Droṇa
was forty-eight miles long
and twenty miles wide.

23 This was Droṇa's special strategy
comprising royal heroes,
elephants, horses, chariots,
and countless foot-soldiers.

24 In the rear of this formation
was another array, the Deep Lotus,
within which puzzle was another,
the Needle.

25 Having planned his manoeuvres,
Droṇa readied for battle.
The Needle's front was guarded
by the mahā-archer Kṛtavarman.

26 Behind him stood the Kāmboja kings
and Jalasandha;
behind them, O honour-bestowing monarch,
were Karṇa and Duryodhana.

27 Next to them were were a hundred thousand
never-retreating warriors –
all of them guarding
the army's wedge-formation.

28 And behind all of them
was rājā Jayadratha himself,
with a huge army,
by the side of the Needle Array.

29 At the mouth of the Wedge,
O Indra-among-rājās, was Bhāradvāja-Droṇa.
Next to him was Bhoja,
reinforcing Droṇa.

30 Clad in white mail and head-gear,
broad-chested and
mahā-muscled, bow-stretching Droṇa stood there
like angry Antaka-Yama!

31 Seeing Droṇa's chariot
with its *vedi*-altar-and-black-deerskin flag,
pulled by dark-red horses,
the Kurus rejoiced.

32 Seeing the mahā-army of Droṇa
heaving like a storm-tossed ocean,
the Siddhas and the Cāraṇas
were spellbound.

33 The world's creatures wondered:
Will this army
Deluge the whole earth –
Mountains,
Oceans,
Forests,
Rivers?

34 But rājā Duryodhana
was filled with delight
when he saw the huge army
in the shape of a Wedge,
with horses and chariots,
and soldiers and elephants,
roaring, trumpeting,
fearfully capable
of smiting his foes.

## SECTION EIGHTY-EIGHT

Sañjaya continued:
1 "When the soldiers took up positions,
O honour-bestowing monarch,
and the kettledrums blared
and *mṛdaṅgas* sounded,

2 When warriors screamed war-cries,
and conches blew,
and musical instruments raised
a horrendous din,

3 When the field was filled
with battle-eager heroes,
when at the hour of Raudra-horror
Savyasācī-Arjuna appeared,

4 Then, O Bharata,
thousands of crows and ravens
fluttered and shrieked
in front of Arjuna's chariot.

5 And as we marched to battle,
inauspicious jackals
and other beasts followed us,
screeching and howling.

6 Mahārāja, strange omens appeared
on the battlefield,
boding disaster for your sons,
and success Pārtha-Arjuna.

7 Meteors
In thousands
Swooshed
With fiery tails
Thudding down
Till the enrth
Shuddered
In fear.

8 When-Kaunteya-Arjuna appeared on the field,
prior to battle,
dry, growling winds scattered sand
and gravel everywhere.

9 At that time Nakula's son Śatānīka
and Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
wisely took stock
of the situation of the Pāṇḍavas.

10 Supported by a thousand chariots,
a hundred elephants,
three thousand horses,
and ten thousand foot-soldiers,

11 Your son Durmarṣaṇa
took over a length of ground
measuring one thousand five hundred bows,
and announced:

12 "Like shores resisting ocean-waves,
I will hold back
the irresistible foe-smiting Arjuna,
wielder of the Gāṇḍīva.

13 Witness, all of you today,
the clash between
brave Dhanañjaya-Arjuna and me,
like rock striking rock!

14 Chariot-heroes yearning for battle!
Stand still and watch!
Alone I'll fight all the Pāṇḍavas
for glory and victory."

15 O rājā! Mahārāja! Having declared this,
your mahātmā, noble-minded son
stood firm,
surrounded by mahā-archers.

16 Like infuriated Antaka-Yama
Like thunder-wielding Vāsava-Indra
Like the club-wielding god of death Mṛtyu
Propelled as it were by Kāla

17 Like imperturbable trident-bearing Śiva
Like noose-carrying Varuṇa
Like the all-consuming fire of doom
At the end of a yuga

18 The slayer of the Navātakavacas
Swelling with wrath and energy
Ever-victorious Jaya-Arjuna devoted to truth
And comiitted to his mahā-vow

19 Armour-enclosed and sword-armed
Golden-diademed and white-flower-garlanded
Robed in white
With beautiful bracelets and glittering earrings

20 Sitting in the finest of chariots
Nara accompanied by Nārāyaṇa
Appeared waving his Gāṇḍīva bow
And shining like the risen sun.

21 Mahā-powerful Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
positioned his chariot facing his foe,
at the point of arrow-shot distance,
and blew his conch.

22 O gracious monarch, the instant Arjuna blew his,
Krishna also blew loudly
on his own wonderful conch,
the Pāñcajanya.

23 O lord of the earth,
the conch cacophony was such
that the warriors of your army trembled
and felt faint.

24 The conch cacophony
filled fear in their hearts
like the fear of rumbling thunder
in beasts of the forest.

25 The animals on the battlefield
passed urine and dung.
Your entire army stood tense,
paralysed, fearful.

26 O gracious rājā, the blare of the conches
petrified your soldiers.
Some collapsed, unconscious;
others were dizzy with dread.

27 Then, suddenly, adding to the terror,
the ape (and other creatures)
in Arjuna's flag opened their mouths
and roared horrendously.

28 Then uprose a tremendous din
of conches, horns, cymbals and drums
sounded by your soldiers
to revive their spirits.

29 The noise!
The wail of the instruments!
The screams of warriors!
The slapping of arm-pits!
The challenges of chariot-heroes!
The endless war-cries!

30 The deafening din –
feared by the timid –
delighted Indra's son Pākaśāsani-Arjuna
and he turned to Dāśārha-Krishna
and said . . .

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## SECTION EIGHTY-NINE

Arjuna said:

1 "Drive my chariot, -Krishna,
to where Durmarṣaṇa is.
I will pierce the elephant ranks
of my foes."

Sañjaya continued:

2 As requested by Savyasācī-Arjuna
the ambidexterous hero,
mahā-muscled Keśava-Krishna urged the steeds
towards Durmarṣaṇa.

3 One hero against many warriors –
a fierce battle
in which countless men, elephants,
and chariots fell.

4 Like dark cloud-masses drenching
a mountain slope,
Pārtha-Arjuna's arrows showered heavily
on his enemies.

5 The soldiers of your army
swiftly reciprocated
with arrow-nets shrouding Krishna
and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

6 Infuriated to fever-pitch,
mahā-muscled Arjuna
sliced with his arrows
the heads of chariot-heroes.

7 The earth was a colourful mass
of handsome heads
with ear-rings and head-gear,
staring eyes, and clenched lips.

8 They lay like lovely crushed lotuses
on the field,
the hosts of decapitated heads
of handsome warriors.

9 Gold-plated armours sprinkled with blood
lay on the field
like cloud-masses streaked
with lightning flashes.

10 The heads, O rājā –
They fell on the earth
With thudding sounds
Like ripe Kāla-cooked palmyra fruits.

11 Some headless trunks stood erect
Clutching their bows.
Some stood stiff
Drawn swords upraised.

12 So obsessed were some to defeat Arjuna
And so singlemindedly hostile
The bull-brave warriors never even realised
When their heads were cut off.

13 The field was littered
with heads of horses,
with elephant trunks,
and heads and arms of soldiers.

14 *Prabhu!* Lord! The soldiers of your army
saw Pārtha-Arjuna everywhere!
"Where is Pārtha?" "Here is Pārtha!"
"This is Pārtha!"

15 Many of them started wildly hitting
at each other.
Confounded by Kāla, they saw the earth
entirely Pārtha-populated.

16 Shrieking in agony, blood-drenched,
semi-conscious heroes
lay prostrate, shouting for help
from friends and relatives.

17 Clutching arrows, lances, darts,
swords, battle-axes,
pointed stakes, and long scimitars,
bows and spears,

18 Shafts and maces, armour-clad,
bracelet-decorated,
looking like huge snakes,
resembling gigantic clubs –

19 Such were the arms sliced off
from their bodies –
they seemed to leap, jerk and roll
as if in anger.

20 Whoever dared to attack Pārtha-Arjuna
fell on the field,
his body pierced by a fatal arrow
from Arjuna's bow.

21 So quickly did he shift positions
in his chariot,
as if dancing, that no one
could get to strike him.

22 His enemies marvelled at the dexterity
with which Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
chose his arrows, nocked them,
and shot them.

23 Phālguna-Arjuna's arrows sliced slephants
and their drivers,
horses and their riders,
and chariots and charioters.

24 None escaped the piercing shafts –
not those facing the Pāṇḍava,
nor those circling him,
nor those readying their moves.

25 Like the sun in the sky scattering
the mahā-darkness of night,
so Arjuna routed the elephants
with his *kaṅka*-feathered shafts.

26 Covered with mutilated
hill-high dying elephants,
your side of the field looked
like the earth on doomsday.

27 Like the sun at high moon
blinding all who see it,
infuriated Dhanañjaya-Arjuna on the battlefield
blinded his enemies.

28 O foe-tormenting king!
Traumatised by Arjuna's arrows,
your soldiers panicked
and fled the field.

29 Like a mahā-tempest that disintegrates
a cloud-congregation,
Arjuna routed your army;
none dared even look at him.

30 Spurring their horses at top speed,
striking their flanks with bow-tips,
growling, whipping,
commanding, threatening,

31 Your army – horses, chariot-heroes,
and foot-soldiers –
tottered in panic, unable to bear
the assault of Arjuna.

32 Others – the elephant ranks – also fled,
driving sharp hooks
in the flanks of the huge beasts.
Some soldiers,
arrow-struck by Arjuna,
blindly rushed towards him.
Your entire army was all chaos
and confusion.

## SECTION NINETY

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:
1 "The vanguard of my army
fell to diadem-decked Arjuna.
Which of my warrior-heroes
were able to confront Dhanañjaya –

2 Or did all of them seek refuge
in the Wedge Array,
preferring the wall-solid protection
of fearless Droṇa?"

Sañjaya replied:

3 O defect-less one, oppressed by Arjuna,
totally dispirited,
fatally afflicted, many warrior-heroes
of your army fled;

4 They were cut down
by Arjuna's incomparable shafts.
Not one dared to so much as look
at Indra's son.

5 Then, rājā, your son Duḥśāsana,
witnessing the rout,
swelled with anger,
and marched against Arjuna.

6 A hero of irrepressible energy,
Duḥśāsana sported
a pure gold helmet, and was encased
in exquisite gold mail.

7 Mahārāja, Duḥśāsana quickly ringed
ambidexterious Arjuna
with a force of elephants,
capable of devouring the earth.

8 The tinklings of bells
on the necks of elephants,
the bow-twangs, conch-blasts, war-cries,
elephant-trumpetings –

9 The cacophony reverberated in the sky,
the earth, and the directions.
It was a fearful,
momentous occasion.

10 Seeing those agitated, huge elephants,
with raised trunks,
prodded with hooks, rushing towards him
like winged mountains,

11 That tiger-among-men Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
screamed his war-cry
like a tiger, and showered the beasts
with his sharp arrows.

12 Like a *makara*-crocodile sliding
inside a tempest-tossed ocean,
diadem-decked Arjuna sliced
through the elephants.

13 Like the sun on the day of doom,
defying direction and time,
obliterator-of-cities Arjuna
seemed to be simultaneously everywhere.

14 The thudding of countless horse hooves,
the rattle of chariot-wheels,
soldiers' war-cries,
and twanging bow-strings,

15 The din of the musical instruments,
the blaring
of the Pāñcajanya and Devadatta conches,
the roar of the Gāṇḍīva –

16 Dispirited your foot-soldiers
and elephant ranks,
harassed by the snake-venomed arrows
of ambidexterous Savyasācī-Arjuna.

17 Hundreds and thousands of arrows
from the Gāṇḍīva
with sharp heads
sliced through the elephant's bodies.

18 Trumpeting in agony as they fell
to diadem-decked Arjuna,
they toppled on the field
like huge wing-sliced mountains.

19 Screeching with the shrill cries of cranes,
other elephants lumbered blindly,
their jaws, ears and temples
shredded by arrows.

20 With thick, knotted *bhalla*-arrows
Arjuna shredded
the heads of warriors riding the necks
of elephants.

21 Their ear-ringed heads fell on the earth
like so many lotuses,
offered to the gods, as it were,
by Pṛthā-Kuntī's son.

22 As the elephants rushed towards Arjuna,
one could see riders dangling,
armour-less, blood-smeared,
trapped in trappings.

23 Sometimes, two or three heroes fell,
shredded by a single
expertly-shot, exquisitely feathered shaft
from the Gāṇḍīva.

24 Pierced with long *nārāca*-shafts
and vomiting blood,
elephants and their riders toppled
like tree-covered hills.

25 With long, straight *bhallas*
Arjuna skilfully disintegrated
the bowstrings, flags, bows, yokes and shafts
of his enemies.

26 No one even saw him take out arrows,
nock them,
pull bowstring, and shoot.
They saw him only as he danced,
as it were, in his chariot,
with bow drawn full maṇḍala-circle.

27 Mutilated grievously with *nārācas,*
many elephants vomited blood
before collapsing
the instant they were struck.

28 Mahārāja, in the fierce blood-bath
one could see
countless headless bodies standing erect
on the field.

29 Arms clutching bows, fingers encased
in leather-protectors,
or holding swords, glittering with armlets
and gold ornaments,
lay scattered in thousands
on the field.

30 With decorative *upaskara*-accessories
and *adhiṣṭhāna*-aids,
with shafts, turbans, shattered chariot-wheels,
yokes and axles,

31 With shield-carrying and bow-armed
heroic warriors,
with flower-garlands, ornaments, robes,
and discarred flagstaffs,

32 With slaughtered elephants and horses,
and butchered Kṣatriyas,
the field of battled
was a ghastly spectacle.

33 Mahārāja, assaulted and decimated
by Kirīṭin-Arjuna's fury,
Duḥśāsana's army and its leaders
panicked and fled.

34 Wounded and afraid,
Duḥśāsana and his army
retreated to the protection
of Droṇa's Wedge formation.

## SECTION NINETY-ONE

Sañjaya said:
1 After decimating Duḥśāsana's troops
the mahā-chariot-hero Savyasācī-Arjuna
attacked the ranks of Droṇa
to punish the Sindhu-rājā Jayadratha.

2 Approaching Droṇa,
who stood at the head of his array,
Arjuna, with Krishna's permission,
did *añjali* and said to Droṇa:

3 "Wish me well, O Brahmin,
bless me with '*Svasti!*'
With your grace I will pierce
these impregnable ranks.

4 For I tell you the truth –
you are to me like my father,
like dharma-rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
like Krishna himself.

5 O immaculate finest of Brahmins, preceptor,
I deserve your protection,
*tāta,* revered one, in the same way
as Aśvatthāman deserves it.

6 I seek your grace
to kill the Sindhu rājā.
*Prabhu*! Lord, finest of men,
grant the fruition of my vow."

7 Addressed in this manner,
ācārya Droṇa said to Bībhatsu-Arjuna:
"You cannot overpower Jayadratha
without first overcoming me."

8 Even as he said these words,
smiling Droṇa shot
a volley of arrows at Arjuna's chariot,
horses, charioteer and flag.

9 With a counter-volley
of more fearful and sharper arrows,
Arjuna repulsed the onslaught
of ācārya Droṇa.

10 O lord of the world! *Viśāmpate!*
Following Kṣatriya-dharma,
Arjuna sought an opening
by shooting nine arrows,

11 But Droṇa baffled Arjuna's arrows,
and harassed
both Krishna and Pāṇḍava-Arjuna
with venom-tipped fire-tongued arrows.

12 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna's strategy
was to sever Droṇa's bow-string,
but even before mahātmā Phālguna-Arjuna
formulated his plan,

13 Valiant Droṇa succeeded
in slicing Arjuna's bow-string;
in addition, he pinned down
Arjuna's horses and charioteer.

14 Droṇa smiled, and oppressed Arjuna
with an arrow-shower.
But Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Arjuna
speedily re-strung his massive bow,

15 And, being skilled in weapons-craft,
shot six hundred shafts so swiftly
it seemed he was shooting
a single arrow.

16 Next: a volley of seven hundred arrows;
then a thousand;
then ten thousand,
massacring the soldiers of Droṇa.

17 Pierced by the arrows
of weapons-skilled Arjuna,
soldiers and horses and elephants
dropped down dead.

18 Struck by these arrows,
chariot-heroes toppled from chariots,
deprived of horses, flags, weapons –
of life itself.

19 And elephants tottered and fell,
like hill-tops, like cloud-masses,
like mansions demolished
by thunder, storm, or fire.

20 Like swarms of swans,
storm-struck on Himālayan peaks,
thousands of horses collapsed,
pierced by Arjuna's arrows.

21 Like the sun at the end of a yuga
dehydrating seas and oceans,
Pāṇḍava-Arjuna with ray-like weapons
consumed warriors, horses and elephants.

22 Then Droṇa appeared
like a cloud raining arrows,
like a cloud obscuring
the sun-shafts of Arjuna
that were reducing to ashes
the Kaurava heroes.

23 Then Droṇa, with tremendous force,
shot a *nārāca* at Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
charged with the energy
to suck a foe's life-blood.

24 Dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna shuddered,
like a mountain in an earthquake,
but, recovering quickly,
afflicted Droṇa with winged arrows.

25 Droṇa shot five arrows at Vāsudeva-Krishna.
He targeted Arjuna
with seventythree arrows,
and his flagstaff with three.

26 O rājā, in no time at all,
illustrious Droṇa
made Arjuna disappear
behind a hail of arrows.

27 We saw Bhāradvāja-Droṇa's arrows stream
in seamless straight lines,
we saw his bow bend
into an enchanting full maṇḍala-circle.

28 An endless shower of *kaṅka*-feathered arrows
of Droṇa, O rājā,
sped across the field
to afflict Vāsudeva-Krishna
and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna

29 Witnessing the Droṇa-Arjuna battle,
mahā-intelligent Vāsudeva-Krishna
concentrated his mind on the priority
of the engagement.

30 So, Vasudeva's son Krishna addressed
these words to Dhanañjaya-Arjuna:
"Pārtha! Pārtha! Mahā-muscled one!
Do not waste time.

31 Let us leave Droṇa,
More important work needs to be done."
To which Pārtha-Arjuna replied,
"Keśava-Krishna, whatever you say."

32 Doing *pradṣkaṇia* to strong-armed Droṇa,
Bībhatsu-Arjuna turned
and released a flood of arrows
at the ācārya.

33 Droṇa said immediately to Arjuna,
"Son of Pāṇḍu, turning back?
But you never leave
without vanquishing your foe."

34 "You are my guru, not my foe,"
replied Arjuna.
"And I am like your own son,
I am your pupil.
No one in this world
can ever defeat you in battle."

Sañjaya continued:

35 Saying this, mahā-muscled Bībhatsu-Arjuna,
eager to kill Jayadratha,
swiftly swerved into the ranks
of the Kaurava heroes.

36 The mahātmā warriors of Pāñcāla,
Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujas,
drove alongside him
as his wheel-protectors.

37 Mahārāja, the progress of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
was blocked by Jaya,
the Sātvata-Kṛtavarman,
the Kāmboja ruler, and Śrutāyus.

38 Reinforcing them was an army
of ten thousand chariot-heroes.
The Abhiṣāhas, Śibis,
Śūrasenas, Vasātis,

39 Māvellakas, Lalitthas, Kekayas, Madrakas,
Nārāyaṇa Gopālas, the Kāmboja tribes,

40 All valiant, all vanquished by Karṇa
in the past,
placed Droṇa at their head,
and launched an attack on Arjuna.

41 To oppose the angry hero,
scorched with grief
by the death of his son,
the armour-clad warrior,
resembling all-annihilating Antaka-Yama,
expert in war-skills,
ready to sacrifice his life
on the battlefield,

42 That finest of mahā-bowmen,
tiger-among-men Arjuna
like a furious lead-elephant
plunged into your army.

43 The battle continued between
Pārtha-Arjuna and those warriors –
a horrendous tumultuous clash,
a horripilating horror.

44 Then, like drugs uniting
to combat a disease,
the Kaurava warriors united
to block bull-brave Arjuna
as he advanced
to slaughter Jayadratha.

## SECTION NINETY-TWO

Sañjaya said:

1 The mahā-powerful chariot-hero
son of Pṛthā-Kuntī
was blocked by these warriors
and pursued by Droṇa.

2 Like diseases riddling a body,
Arjuna riddled the army
with sharp arrows
that flashed like rays of sunlight.

3 Horses shredded
Chariots smashed
Elephants toppled along with mahouts
Umbrellas ripped apart
Vehicles rendered wheel-less . . .

4 Pierced with afflicting arrows,
the army fled in wild abandon;
in that Arjuna-Kaurava battle,
all became a confused cacophony.

5 O rājā, the Kauravas struggled to regroup,
but Arjuna
made his enemies tremble
with swift-and-straight arrows.

6 Truth-firm, white-horsed Śvetavāhana-Arjuna,
true to his vow,
attacked the finest of chariot-heroes,
red-horsed Śoṇāśva-Droṇa.

7 Ācārya Droṇa let loose
twentyfive bone-piercing
arrows at his disciple,
the mahā-bowman Arjuna.

8 Arms-expert dreadful-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna
fired arrows at Droṇa
that neutralised the shafts
shot by Droṇa.

9 But strong-ātmaned Droṇa
repulsed Arjuna' shafts
with his knotted *bhalla*-shafts,
and readied his Brāhma missile.

10 Behold the celestial skill
of ācārya Droṇa!
Young and energetic Arjuna
failed to counter him.

11 Like mahā cloud-clusters
cascading incessant rain,
the Droṇa-cloud arrow-showered
the Pārtha-mountain.

12 O gracious monarch!
Energetic Arjuna absorbed the arrow-shower,
and with his own Brāhma-missile
neutralised the assault.

13 But Droṇa harassed him
and his white horses
with twentyfive arrows,
and wounded Vāsudeva-Krishna's chest and arms.

14 Supremely intelligent Pārtha-Arjuna
smiled at the ācārya
and baffled him and his stream
of swift-and-straight arrows.

15 Super-chariot-heroes Krishna and Arjuna,
harassed by Droṇa,
who scorched like a Yugānta-fire,
drove off elsewhere.

16 Escaping the sharp shafts of Droṇa,
the son of Kuntī,
diadem-decked Kirīṭin-Arjuna
decided to kill the Bhojas.

17 Escaping Droṇa who stood as firm
as the Maināka mountain,
Arjuna positioned himself between Kṛtavarman
and Sudakṣiṇa of the Kāmbojas.

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18 That lion-among-men,
Kṛtavarman of the Bhojas,
shot ten *kaṅka*-feathered arrows at Arjuna
the heroic Kuru-descendant.

19 O rājā, with three sharp arrows
Arjuna countered
and baffled Kṛtavarman
the Sātvata-descendant.

20 Laughing, the ruler of the Bhojas
wounded Pārtha-Arjuna
and Mādhava-Vāsudeva-Krishna
with a volley of twentyfive arrows each.

21 Slicing Kṛtavarman's bow, Arjuna swiftly
released twentyone
fire-spitting and snake-venomed shafts
at Kṛtavarman.

22 O Bharata! The mahā-chariot-hero Kṛtavarman
picked up another bow
and shot five swift arrows
at Arjuna's chest.

23 With another volley of five
he wounded Pārtha-Arjuna.
But Arjuna countered with nine
that struck his adversary's chest.

24 Seeing Kuntī's son Arjuna
locked in duel with the chariot
of Kṛtavarman, Vārṣṇeya-Krishna decided
to waste no more time.

25 Krishna said to Pṛthā-Kuntī's son:
"Show no mercy to your kinsman.
Pin him down –
and kill him."

26 Bewildering Kṛtavarman
with volleys of arrows,
Arjuna drove his swift horses
through the Kāmboja ranks.

27 Seeing Arjuna's white horses
penetrate his ranks,
Kṛtavarman, enraged, strung his bow,
and attacked the two Pāñcāla princes

28 Who were protecting the wheels
of Arjuna's chariot.
Waving his strung bow,
he pounced upon the princes.

29 The Bhoja ruler Kṛtavarman
pierced Yudhāmanyu with three,
and Uttamaujas
with four sharp arrows.

30 They retaliated with ten each,
wounding Kṛtavarman.
With another three arrows each,
Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujas

31 Shredded Kṛtavarman's bow and flagstaff.
Burning with anger,
and brandishing another bow,
Hārdikya-Kṛtavarman

32 Pulverised the bows of both
and shaft-shrouded the heroes.
But they strung fresh bows,
and attacked the Bhoja ruler.

33 Meanwhile, Bībhatsu-Arjuna
slipped within the enemy ranks.
But his two wheel-protectors,
blocked by Kṛtavarman,

34 Could not break through the Dhārtaraṣṭra ranks,
however hard both bull-brave heroes tried.
White-horsed Śvetavāhana-Arjuna
skilfully harassed his enemy,

35 Refraining though from killing Kṛtavarman,
in spite of his advantage.
Seeing Arjuna advancing,
the valiant rājā Śrutāyudha,

36 Livid with rage, twanging his massive bow,
swooped upon him.
Wounding Pārtha-Arjuna with three,
and Janārdana-Krishna with seventy shafts,

37 He shattered Pārtha-Arjuna's flagstaff
with a razor-shaft.
With a volley of ninety fierce knotted arrows,
Arjuna

38 Angrily pinned him down,
like a mahout pinning
a mahā-elephant with a hook.
O rājā! Unable to tolerate this,

39 Śrutāyudha harassed Arjuna
with seventy-seven *nārāca* arrows.
Splintering Śrutāyudha's bow and quiver,
Arjuna

40 Furiously shot seven knotted arrows
at Śrutāyudha's chest.
Giddy with anger, and picking up
another bow, the rājā

41 Pierced Indra's son Vāsavi-Arjuna
with nine long arrows.
Subduer-of-foes Arjuna, smiling,
rendered Śrutāyudha

42 Helpless with thousands of arrows.
O Bharata! The mahā-chariot-hero Arjuna
killed Śrutāyudha's horses
and charioteer,

43 And with seventy *nārāca*-arrows
Pārtha-Arjuna wounded Śrutāyudha.
His horses slain, rājā Śrutāyudha
abandoned his chariot,

44 And, whirling his mace,
the hero rushed across the field at Arjuna.
Rājā Śrutāyudha
was Varuṇa's son,

45 His mother was Parnāśā, the mahā-river,
the river-of-cool-waters.
O rājā! For the sake of her son,
she had said to Varuṇa:

46 "Make my son unslayable
by his enemies on earth."
Varuṇa, happy with her, said:
"I grant this boon.

47 I give your son a divine weapon
that makes him unkillable.
But there is no way
a mortal can become immortal.

48 O finest of rivers,
whoever is born is sure to die.
However, your son will be invincible
on the battlefield,

49 Because he possesses this weapon.
Calm your fevered mind."
Saying this, Varuṇa gave him
the mantra-charged mace

50 With whose power Śrutāyudha
became invincible in the worlds.
The lord-of-waters Jaleśvara-Bhagavān Varuṇa
added, however:

51 "*Prabhu*! My lordly son! Never use this mace
against one not fighting,
otherwise it will reverse on you,
and kill its wielder."

52 But when the time came for its use,
Śrutāyudha disregarded Varuṇa's warning,
he attacked Janārdana-Krishna
with that foe-crushing mace.

53 Valiant Krishna absorbed the blows
on his shapely shoulders;
but the mace affected him no more
than a gusting wind the Vindhya mountain.

54 Like ill-performed magic harming the magician,
the mace turned on Śrutāyudha
and smote him
where he stood, fatally.

55 Having killed the hero,
it thudded on the ground.
Seeing Śrutāyudha dead,
and the mace lying beside him,

56 A mahā-clamour of grief – "Hai! Hai!" –
arose from the warriors,
who had seen with their own eyes
their foe-crushing ruler slain.

57 O ruler of men!
Śrutāyudha hurled the mace
at non-combatant Keśava-Krishna,
so it swerved back and killed him.

58 Śrutāyudha died on the field
as warned by Varuṇa,
and his collapse was witnessed
by all the great archers.

59 The handsome son of Parnāśā
perished magnificently,
like a many-branched tall tree
toppled by a tempest.

60 Seeing the mighty subduer-of-foes
Śrutāyudha fall,
the warriors and army leaders
panicked and scattered.

61 Then the Kāmboja ruler's son
Sudakṣiṇa attacked
the swift-horse-driven foe-slayer
Phālguna-Arjuna.

62 O Bharata! Pārtha-Arjuna fired seven arrows;
they pierced his body,
and embedded themselves
in the earth.

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63 Injured by the sharp arrows
of the Gāṇḍīva-wielder,
he counter-attacked
with ten *kaṅka*-feathered shafts.

64 He wounded Vāsudeva-Krishna with three such,
and Pārtha-Arjuna with five.
Then Arjuna splintered his bow, O gracious monarch,
and sliced his flagstaff.

65 Next Pāṇḍava-Arjuna pinned him down
with two sharp *bhalla*-shafts.
He, with a lion-roar,
countered with three *bhallas*.

66 Valiant Sudakṣiṇa, livid with rage,
hurled a horrendous,
belled, full-steel *śakti*-spear
at the Gāṇḍīva-wielder.

67 Like a mahā-meteor, that spear,
trailing a stream of fire,
pierced mahā-chariot-hero Arjuna,
and stuck in the ground.

68 Wounded by that fierce *śakti*,
mahā-energetic Arjuna fainted;
recovering, the great hero
licked the corners of his mouth.

69 With fourteen *kaṅka*-plumed *nārāca*-shafts
Pārthā-Arjuna of inconceivable prowess
attacked Sudakṣiṇa,
horses, charioteer, bow, flagstaff – all.

70 With a host of other arrows,
he shattered the chariot of Sudakṣiṇa,
baffling the skill and strategy
of the Kāmboja king.

71 With a super-sharp arrow,
Pāṇḍava Arjuna shredded his chest.
Armour smashed, limbs trembling,
diadem and ornaments slipping,

Transcreated by P. Lal

72 The Śrīmān hero fell, head down,
like a flagpole ripped from its base;
like a graceful,
hill-rooted, lovely-branched

73 *Karṇikāra*-tree, prostrate
after a freak storm in spring.
He, used to luxurious Kāmboja beds,
lay lifeless on the earth.

74 Glittering with expensive ornaments,
Sudakṣiṇa lay
like a glorious flat-topped mountain
toppled –

75 The rājā of the Kāmbojas
killed by Pārtha-Arjuna's arrows,
still wearing his diadem of gold,
dazzling like fire.

76 Though lifeless, the mahā-muscled warrior
radiated beauty.
Seeing Śrutāyudha slain
along with the Kāmboja prince Sudakṣiṇa,
the warriors of your son's army
panicked and fled.

## SECTION NINETY-THREE

Sañjaya continued:

1 O rājā! After the deaths of Sudakṣiṇa
and valiant Śrutāyudha,
your warriors, furious, recovered
and attacked Pārtha-Arjuna.

2 O rājā! The Abhiṣāhas, Śūrasenas, Śibis
and Vasātis
let loose a downpower of arrows
on Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

3 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna wiped out
six thousand of them
with his arrows; the rest fled,
like deer before a tiger.

4 But they re-grouped,
and surrounded Pārtha-Arjuna,
even as he concentrated
on finishing off the stragglers.

5 As they rushed at him,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna lifted his Gāṇḍīva
and sliced off heads and arms
with showers of arrows.

6 On the battlefield, hordes of severed heads;
In the sky, clouds of ravens and vultures.

7 Seeing their warriors liquidated by Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
Angry Śrutāyu and Acyutāyu attacked him.

8 Those two noble-born heroes, brave, proud, skilled,
Showered their arrows right and left

9 With unerring dexterity. Their aim, mahārāja,
Was mahā-fame for themselves and success for your son

10 Like clouds flooding a lake
with heavy showers,
the two heroes swamped Arjuna
with hundreds of knotted shafts.

11 Śrutāyu, bursting with anger, super-chariot-hero,
Wounded Dhanañjaya-Arjuna with a finely tempered lance.

12 Foe-subduing Arjuna, grievously pierced by his foe,
Fainted on the field, to Keśava-Krishna's consternation.

13 Seizing this chance, the mahā-chariot-hero Acyutāyu
Struck Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna with a sharp trident.

14 It was like pouring salt
on suffering mahātmā Arjuna;
Pārtha-Arjuna steadied himself
by gripping his flagstaff.

15 Then, O lord of men,
a huge roaring as of lions
arose from your warriors,
who thought Dhanañjaya-Arjuna was killed.

16 Seeing Dhanañjaya-Arjuna swaying as if senseless,
Krishna was perturbed;
he tried to revive Arjuna with sweet,
consoling words.

17 The two excelling chariot-heroes,
making Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
and Vārṣṇeya-Krishna their targets,
rained arrows on them,

18 On their chariot, chariot-wheels, *kūbaras*,
horses, flagstaff, pennant,
shrouding them into non-visibility.
An incredible feat!

19 O Bharata! Bībhatsu-Arjuna recovered, slowly, like one
Escaping from a visit to the realm of death.

20 He glimpsed his chariot and Keśava-Krishna
trapped in an arrow-net;
he saw his two enemies facing him
like two dazzling fires;

21 Mahā-chariot-hero Arjuna invoked
the Indra-missile Śākrāstra,
and thousands of arrows
sped out of that weapon.

22 They struck the two bowmen, and neutralised
Their arrows, which flopped harmlessly from the sky.

23 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna,
neutralising the arrows aimed at him,
roamed the field to skirmish
with other mahā-chariot-heroes.

24 Their heads and arms sliced
by Phalguna-Arjuna's arrows,
the two heroes tumbled like trees
downed by a storm.

25 The slaughter of Śrutāyu and Acyutāyu
Was as shocking as the drying-up of an ocean.

26 After killing fifty chariot-hero-followers
of the two princes,
Pārtha-Arjuna wrought havoc in the Bharata ranks,
killing elephants and warriors.

27 O Bharata! Witnessing the deaths of Śrutāu and
Acyutāyu
Infuriated Niyutāyu and Dīrghāyu,

28 Their two sons, both excelling heroes,
attacked Arjuna,
showering a diversity of arrows
on Kuntī's son.

29 But Arjuna's fury was now
at fever pitch –
his knotted shafts sped them
to the realm of Yama.

30 The bull-brave Kṣatriyas of your army
failed to block Arjuna,
who trampled your warriors like an elephant
trampling lake-blossoming lotuses.

31 O rājā! Thousands of elephant-warriors
of the Anga division
angrily encircled Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
with their elephants.

32 Under the leadership of Duryodhana,
rulers of the east and the south,
headed by the Kaliṅga ruler,
surrounded Arjuna.

33 But Gāṇḍīva-wielding Arjuna swiftly
cut off the ornamented
heads and arms of the heroes
who were attacking him.

34 Littered with severed heads
and *aṅgada*-laden arms,
the field seemed covered
with serpent-encircled golden stones.

35 Arrow-severed arms and crushed heads
Looked like birds dropped from trees.

36 Thousand-arrow-pierced bleeding elephants
Were like monsoon mountains streaming with red mud.

37 Others killed by Arjuna's knotted arrows
lay on the field,
still on elephants' backs –
these were ugly Mleccha warriors.

38 Others, blood-drenched, stricken fatally
by different arrows, O rājā,
various-robed, various-weaponed, lay dead,
looking strangely beautiful.

39 Thousands of elephants and mahouts
and their followers,
pierced by the arrows of Pārtha-Arjuna,
vomited blood.

40 They screamed in agony, they collapsed, they ran wild.
Other elephants panicked and crushed their own
warriors.

41 Still other elephants, variously weaponed,
Fierce like poisonous snakes, did likewise.

42 Many conversant with anti-god māyā,
fierce-natured, wild-eyed,
quarrelsome Yavanas, Pāradas, Śakas, Bāhlīkas,
black as crows,
ill-mannered, lustful, also took part
in the fierce battle.

43 Drāviḍas ferocious like musth elephants,
and as brave,
cow-born Mlecchas resembling Death's messengers,
also took part,

44 Along with countless hordes
of Dārvātisāras, Daradas, and Puṇḍras –
hundreds and thousands
of them.

45 These Mlecchas, skilled in war-craft,
Showered Pāṇḍava-Arjuna with volleys of arrows.

46 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna deluged them with a counter-
shower.
His arrows sped like a swarm of locusts.

47 Creating a thick arrow-cloud
over the shaven,
half-shaven, matted-haired, filthy hordes,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna killed

48 All the Mlecchas
with his marvellous powerful weapons.
Hundreds of mountain and cave-dwellers
fled in terror.

49 Ravens, *kaṅkas*, vultures and wolves drank the blood
Delightedly of elephants and horses ridden by
Mlecchas.

50 Foot-soldiers, chariot-heroes, horses and elephants
became bridges, as it were;
arrow-heaps the rafts; hair, moss and weeds;
blood, the heaving waves;

51 Sliced fingers the small fishes –
a horrendous river of Kāla at Yuga-end
created by Arjuna;
elephant-corpses blocking its flow

52 Of blood produced by princes, and by riders
of horses, chariots and elephants.
Just as Vāsava-Indra blurs lowland and upland
with a deluge,

53 The earth was made level
with a vast lake of blood.
Six thousand horse-riders
and one thousand other heroes

54 Were despatched by Arjuna to the death-realm
of bull-brave Kṣatriyas.
Felled by hundreds upon hundreds of arrows,
thousands of elephants

55 Lay on the field like hills
struck by lightning.
Arjuna wiped out horses,
elephants and chariots

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56 Like a musth elephant trampling
a forest of reeds.
Like a forest of trees, creepers, bushes
and dry grass

57 Reduced to ashes by a wind-fanned fire,
The forest-army, fanned by Krishna-wind,

58 Was consumed by the arrowflames of Pāṇḍava
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
Overturning the terraced chariots, the earth

59 Was shrouded by Dhanañjaya-Arjuna with human
corpses.
Drenching the earth with blood with thunder-arrows,

60 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna angrily penetrated
the Bharata ranks;
he was obstructed by Śrutāyudha,
the ruler of Ambaṣṭha.

61 O gracious monarch! Arjuna,
with *kaṅka*-plumed arrows,
cut down the horses of Ambaṣṭha
even as he advanced.

62 With another volley of arrows,
he sliced his bow.
Angrily rolling his eyes,
Ambaṣṭha swung his mace

63 And rushed at Pārtha-Arjuna
and the maha-chariot-hero Keśava-Krishna.
O Bharata! That remarkable warrior,
with his uplifted mace,

64 Blocked the path of Arjuna's chariot,
and hit Keśava-Krishna
Seeing Keśava-Krishna struck with the mace,
slayer-of-enemies

65 Arjuna, roused to fierce wrath,
with gold-winged arrows overwhelmed
the mace-wielding chariot-hero Ambaṣṭha,
O Bharata,

66 Like a huge cloud-cluster
shrouding the risen sun.
Then, with an arrow-volley,
mahātmā Arjuna shattered Ambaṣṭha's maee

67 Into fragments.
An incredible feat of Pārtha-Arjuna!
His mace pulverised,
Ambaṣṭha picked up another mahā-mace,

68 And attacked Vāsudeva-Krishna
and Arjuna afresh.
Arjuna, with two razor-arrows,
sliced his mace-wielding arm

69 Which resembled the pole of Indra;
and decapitated him, O rājā,
with a winged arrow.
He collapsed with a crashing thud,

70 As a pole in honour of Indra falls
when its rope is cut.
Penetrating deep into the chariot-ranks,
surrounded by hundreds
of elephants and horses, Pārtha-Arjuna
resembled a cloud-circled sun.

## SECTION NINETY-FOUR

Sañjaya continued:

1 After Kuntī's son Arjuna, intent on killing
the Sindhu rājā Jayadratha,
broke through the formidable ranks
of Droṇa and the Bhojas,

2 And when, O rājā,
prince Sudakṣiṇa of the Kāmbojas
and puissant Śrutāyudha were killed
by ambidexterous Savyasācī-Arjuna,

3 When the formations of your army,
routed, had scattered,
your son, witnessing the total carnage,
sped towards Droṇa.

[VII:94:4-12]

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4 From that solitary chariot,
Duryodhana addressed Droṇa:
"That tiger-among-men has decimated
our mighty army.

5 Tell us in your wisdom
what now should be done,
in view of this calamitous setback,
to kill Arjuna.

6 Ensure that tiger-among-men Arjuna
does not kill Jayadratha.
May you succeed!
You are our sole saviour.

7 Like a huge fire reducing dry grass
to ashes,
the fire of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
has with the wind of his wrath
reduced the dry grass of my army
to an ash-heap.

8 O tormentor of foes, hearing that Arjuna
has pierced the ranks,
the warriors protecting Jayadratha
are losing hope.

9 O brilliant Brahma-knower, all the kings were confident
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna would never be able to escape
Droṇa.

10 You who shine with fiery mahā-splendour!
Before your very eyes,
Pārtha-Arjuna has wrought ruin on us.
I have no army left!

11 I know you wish the welfare of the Pāṇḍavas.
O mahā-fortune-favoured one!
I am completely confused.
What should I do, O Brahmin?

12 Brahmin, I have done my best
to please you,
I have behaved well with you.
Yet you seem to be indifferent.

13 O infinitely powerful one,
you ignore us, your *bhaktas,*
and are happy with the Pāṇḍavas
who wish us ill.

14 We ensure your livelihood,
yet you harm us.
I did not know
you are a honey coated razor.

15 If you had not assured me
you would crush Pāṇḍava-Arjuna,
I would not have stopped Jayadratha
returning to his kingdom.

16 Fool I was, trusting your protection,
and reassuring Jayadratha;
I have succeeding in sending the Sindhu ruler
to his death.

17 A man can escape
from the jaws of Yama, god of death;
but there is no escape for Jayadratha
once he faces Arjuna.

18 Crimson-horse owner!
See to it that Jayadratha is saved.
Do not resent my fulminations.
Save the Sindhu!"

19 "I am not upset by your words,"
replied Droṇa.
"To me you are like Aśvatthāman.
O lord of the world! Listen to the truth.

20 Krishna is the finest of charioteers,
his horses the swiftest.
He can manoeuvre-Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
through the narrowest passage.

21 Can you not see how my arrows
fall a full *krośa* behind
diadem-decked, bow-brandishing Arjuna
in his speeding chariot?

22 I am old; I cannot keep pace. See!
The entire army of Pārtha-Arjuna confronts us.

23 O strong-armed one! I have vowed to the Kṣatriyas
That I will personally capture Yudhiṣṭhira.

24 O king! Separated from Arjuna,
Yudhiṣṭhira stands before me.
I will not fight Arjuna,
leaving my army vulnerable.

25 You have support. Go, fight Arjuna
who equals you in birth and skill.
Do not fear.
You are the lord of the world.

26 You are a rājā, a hero,
famous for defeating foes.
O router of the Pāṇḍavas,
go and fight Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!"

27 "Ācārya," said Duryodhana,
"how can I defeat Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
who had surpassed even you,
the finest arms-wielder?

28 I could perhaps overcome
thunderbolt-wielding Puraṁdara-Indra,
but I cannot overcome Arjuna,
crusher of hostile cities.

29 He, who has vanquished with his missiles
the Bhoja Hārdikya-Kṛtavarman,
and even god-like magnificent you,
who has killed Śrutāyu,

30 He who has killed rājā Śrutāyudha
and Sudakṣiṇa,
as well as Śrutāyu and Acyutāyu
and hundreds of Mlecchas,–

31 How can I face that Arjuna,
fierce as an all-incinerating fire,
skilled in the use of every kind
of destructive weapon?

32 How can you even think me capable
of such a feat today?
I seek your protection, I depend on you.
Save my honour!"

33 "Kaurava," replied Droṇa,
"what you say is all true.
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna is invincible.
But I have a plan to contain him.

34 All the bowmen of the world
will today witness
the marvellous feat of Pāṇḍava Arjuna frustrated,
in Vāsudeva-Krishna's presence!

35 I will so encase you
in this golden coat of mail
that no weapon released in battle
will harm you.

36 If even the gods, anti-gods, yakṣas,
rākṣasas, *uraga*-reptiles,
and all humans in the three worlds fight you,
you need not fear.

37 Neither Krishna nor Kaunteya-Arjuna
nor any weapons-wielder
will succeed today in piercing your armour
on the battlefield.

38 Impervious in this golden armour,
confront angry Arjuna in person.
He will not be able
to harm you today."

39 Saying this (continued Sañjaya),
Droṇa rinsed his mouth with water,
chanted mantras,
and encased Duryodhana in gold armour.

40 That supreme Brahma-knower was eager
to ensure victory for your son,
and impress the world
with his great learning.

41 Droṇa chanted: "O descendant of Bharata!
May Brahman
May Brahmā
May the twice-born Brahmins
Bless you! *Svasti*!
May the finest of serpents
Bless you! *Svasti*!

42 May Nahuṣa's son Yayāti
May Dhundhumāra and Bhāgīratha
And other royal ṛṣis bless you! *Svasti*!

43 May one-legged creatures
May many-legged creatures
May no-legged creatures
Bless you in this mahā-battle. *Svasti*!

44 May Svāhā and Svadhā and Śacī
Always bless you! *Svasti*!
O defectless one
May Lakṣmī and Arundhati
Bless you! *Svasti*!

45 O king
May Asita, Devala, Viśvāmitra, Aṅgiras,
May Vasiṣṭha and Kaśyapa
Bless you! *Svasti*!

46 May Dhātā and Vidhātā
May the quarters of the world and their protectors
May six-headed Kārtikeya
Bless you today! *Svasti*!

47 May Bhagavān Vivasvat
Bless you in all ways! *Svasti*!
May the four quarter-guarding elephants
May the earth, the sky, the planets

48 May he who from below upholds the earth
May the supreme serpent Punnaga-Śeṣa
Bless you! *Svasti*!

49 Son of Gāndhārī, in the distant past
the *daitya* Vṛtra, in battle,
shredded the bodies
of hundreds of gods.

50 The heaven-dwellers, led by Indra,
terrorised by the anti-god Vṛtra,
sought shelter
with Brahmā.

51 'O Supreme Deity,' the gods pleaded,
'protect us! O lord of the gods!
Save us from Vṛtra!
Great is our mahā-fear.'

52 With Viṣṇu standing beside him,
Brahmā said
these fit words to the depressed gods
led by Śakra-Indra:

53 'The gods led by Indra, and Brahmins,
deserve my protection.
But the energy of Tvaṣṭā which created Vṛtra
is incredibly powerful.

54 A long time ago, after fierce tapasyā,
Tvaṣṭā created Vṛtra
after obtaining permission to do so
from Maheśvara-Śiva.

55 It is through Hara-Śiva's grace alone
that he has routed you.
You cannot get Śaṅkara-Śiva Bhagavān's darshan
without going to his abode.

56 After seeing him, you will defeat Vṛtra.
Go to Mandara mountain;
the yoni of all tapasyā,
the destroyer of Dakṣa's yajña,

57 The wielder of the *pināka*,
the lord of all creatures,
the destroyer of Bhaga's eyes lives there.'
Brahmā took them there –

58 A flaming mass of energy,
the light of one crore suns.
Welcoming the, Śiva said,
'Gods, how can I help you?

59 My darshan is never fruitless.
May what you wish bear fruit!'
The heaven-dwellers listened
and said:

60 'Our powers have been ruined by Vṛtra.
Protect the dwellers of heaven.
O Divine One, look how he has mutilated us!
O Maheśvara, protect us. Give us refuge.'

61 'Gods,' said Śarva-Śiva,
'you know how Tvaṣṭā created
this fearful, mahā-powerful creature,
who defies all who are not disciplined.

62 My duty is to protect heaven-dwellers.
Therefore, Śakra-Indra,
take my body's shining armour,
and put it on yourself.

63 O lord-of-the-gods Sureśvara!
Strap this armour and chant mantras.
With it you will kill Vṛtra,
the enemy of the gods.'

64 Saying this, boon-granting Śiva
(continued Droṇa)
gave him the armour and mantras,
and mail-clad Indra attacked Vṛtra.

65 Various weapons were hurled
in that horrendous battle,
but none could dent or pierce
Indra's armour.

66 For the lord of the gods Devapati-Indra
killed Vṛtra in battle,
and gave the mantra-charged armour
to Aṅgiras.

67 Aṅgiras passed it on
to his mantra-learned son Bṛhaspati,
and Bṛhaspati passed it on
to wise Agniveśya.

68 Agniveśya gave it to me.
O incomparable king! With those mantras
I make you invulnerable
in this golden armour."

69 With these words (Sañjaya continued)
the bull-brave ācārya Droṇa
added the following advice
to your mahā-radiant son:

70 "O Bharata! I weld this armour
with Brahma-thread for you,
and give it to you as Golden-Wombed Brahmā
once gave it to Viṣṇu in battle.

71 I place it on you exactly as Brahmā
placed this armour
on Sakra-Indra's body when he fought
the battle over Tvaṣṭā."

72 Encasing rājā Duryodhana
in that mantra-welded armour,
twice-born Droṇa sent him to fight
the great battle.

73 The mahā-muscled king,
armed by the mahātmā ācārya,
supported by a thousand expert-in-destroying
Trigarta chariot heroes,

74 A thousand musth elephants
of tremendous strength,
a hundred thousand horses,
and countless mahā-chariot-heroes,

75 Marched against the chariot of Arjuna,
the mahā-muscled warrior,
to the accompaniment of many musical instruments,
like Virocana's son Bali.

76 O Bharata! The shattering mahā-noise
created by your Kaurava army
seeing your son Duryodhana advance
resembled the roaring of the ocean.

## SECTION NINETY-FIVE

1 When bull-brave Duryodhana
attacked from the rear
Pārtha-Arjuna and Vārṣṇeya-Krishna
from deep in his ranks,

2 The Somaka-assisted Pāṇḍavas fiercely attacked Droṇa,
And a mahā-gruesome clash ensued between them
and Droṇa.

3 A horripilating tumultuous clash
Of Kaurava and Pāṇḍava!
A horrendous encounter
Fearful and grisly
In the army's rear.

4 O lord of the world! It was high noon.
Never in our lives, O rājā,
had we heard of or seen
such a fierce battle.

5 The soldiers of Pārtha-Arjuna,
led by Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
in disciplined ranks,
deluged Droṇa's army with arrows.

6 We also placed the finest of archers Droṇa
at our head
and arrow-drowned the soldiers
of Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

7 The giant chariot-teeming armies
looked as wonderful
as two summer wind-driven cloud-masses
rushing at each other.

8 They battered at each other,
these two massive forces,
like the monsoon-swollen waters of Yamunā
and Jāhnavī-Gaṅgā.

9 Elephants, horses and chariots variously armed
 – were the wind;
Warriors swinging glittering fearful maces
 – the lightning;
The huge army of the Kauravas
 – the cloud-masses.

10 The Bhāradvaja-Droṇa-storm with its deluge of arrows
Kept trying to quench the Pāṇḍava-conflagration.

11 The supreme twice-born warrior Droṇa confounded
The Pāṇḍavas like a summer mahā-storm the ocean.

12 The Pāṇḍavas also joined forces against Droṇa,
Pushing like a huge current dashing at an embankment.

13 But, like a mountain blocking
 an onrushing wall of water,
furious Droṇa stood firm against the Pāṇḍavas,
 Pāñcālas and Kekayas.

14 Other heroic and powerful rājās also
Encircled the Pāñcālas and attacked them.

15 Lion-among-men Dhṛṣṭadyumna, with Pāṇḍava help,
Repeatedly tried to breach the ranks of Droṇa.

16 Exactly as Droṇa deluged Dhṛṣṭadyumna with arrows,
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna rained arrows at Droṇa.

17 Scimitar, lance, dart, rapier, and sword
 – were its wind;
Bowstring, its flash of lightning;
Bow-twang, its rumble of thunder.
 So the Dhṛṣṭadyumna-cloud

18 Shot a deluge of weapons and stone-showers,
Blocking chariot-heroes and excellent horsemen,
Drowning the earth with streams of gushing blood.

19 Pṛṣata's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna
 was able to prevent Droṇa
breaking through the breaches
 in the Pāṇḍava chariot-ranks.

20 O Bharata! Despite his best efforts, Droṇa's army
 split into three
As a result of Dhṛṣṭadyumna's persistent assaults.

21 Harassed by the Pāṇḍava forces,
one segment fled to Bhoja,
one to Jalasaṁdha,
and the third remained with Droṇa.

22 Again and again Droṇa re-grouped his warriors;
Again and again mahā-chariot-hero Dhṛṣṭadyumna
split them apart.

23 Like cattle without herdsmen falling prey to wild
beasts,
the Dhārtarāṣṭras were killed by the Pāṇḍavas and
Sṛñjayas,

24 Those who saw the carnage
thought that Kāla personified,
through Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
was devouring the stupefied warriors.

25 Like the kingdom of a wicked monarch
ravaged by famine, disease and robbers,
your warriors were devastated
by the Pāṇḍavas.

26 Our eyes were dazzled and blinded
by the sunlight
falling on weapons and armours,
and by the clouds of dust.

27 Seeing his ranks broken into three
and slowly decimated,
infuriated Droṇa again deluged the Pāñcālas
with his arrows.

28 As he crushed the Pāñcāla host,
Droṇa looked
like an incarnation of the doomsday fire
of Kāla.

29 O lord of the earth! The mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa
wounded chariot-warriors,
elephants, horses and foot-soldiers –
with a single arrow each.

30 O Bharata, lord! No one among the Pāṇḍavas
Could withstand the ferocity of Droṇa's bow.

31 Harassed by the heat of the sun and Droṇa's arrows,
The army of the Pāṇḍavas teetered right and left,
O Bharata.

32 Your soldiers also, pinned by Dhṛṣṭadyumna's arrows,
Exploded here and there, like trees in a forest-fire.

33 Though harassed by the arrows of Droṇa and
Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
The soldiers fought with full śakti, regardless of their
lives.

34 O bull-brave Bharata! Mahārāja!
There was not one
among your or the enemies' ranks
who fled in fear.

35 Duryodhana's brothers, Viviṁśati, Citrasena,
and the mahā-chariot hero Vikarṇa
engaged Bhīma
in battle.

36 The three Avanti princes –
Vinda, Anuvinda and tremendously valiant
Kṣemadhūrti–
aided your three sons.

37 The mahā-chariot-hero rājā Bāhlika,
strong and noble,
supported by warriors and ministers,
blocked the sons of Draupadī.

38 Rājā Govāsana of Śibi,
reinforced by a thousand splendid warriors,
confronted in battle
the king of Kāśi.

39 Rājā Śalya of the Madras confronted
Fire-radiant and ever-undefeated Kaunteya-Yudhiṣṭhira.

40 Anger-propelled and revengeful Duḥśāsana,
brave inspirer of his ranks,
marched against
the chariot-hero Sātyaki.

41 Clad in mail and fully armed,
commanding four hundred
of the finest archers of the war,
I faced Cekitāna.

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42 Śakuni with seven hundred warriors from Gāndhāra,
Carrying lances, darts and bows, challenged Nakula.

43 The two princes Vinda and Anuvinda,
brandishing their bows,
recklessly attacked Virāṭa of the Matsyas,
to impress Duryodhana.

44 With all his might Bāhlīka blocked
the invincible,
routing-all-foes
son of Yajñasena-Drupada.

45 The Sauvīra Avanti princes and cruel Prabhadrakas
Opposed the wrathful Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

46 Alāyudha swiftly confronted the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca,
Who had come to do fierce and cruel battle.

47 The mahā-chariot-hero Kuntibhoja, with many warriors
Battled the irascible Alambuṣa, the Indra-of-rākṣasas.

48 The Sindhu ruler Jayadratha, at his army's rear,
O Bharata,
Was protected by Kṛpa and many chariot-heroes.

49 The Sindhu ruler Jayadratha, O rājā,
had two wheel-protectors:
on his right Droṇa's son ,
on his left the Sūta's son Karṇa.

50 Other warriors led by Somadatta's son guarded his rear:
Kṛpa, Vṛṣaena, Śala, and irresistible Śalya.

51 Many mahā-bowmen,
well-versed in the arts of war and strategy,
protected the Sindhu ruler
from the Pāṇḍavas.

## SECTION NINETY-SIX

Sañjaya continued:

1 O rājā, let me describe to you the remarkable battle
That took place between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas.

2 The Pāṇḍavas, eager to slice through
the Kaurava ranks,
clashed with Bharadvāja's son Droṇa
and his warriors.

3 Droṇa too, eager to gain mahā-fame,
fought the Pāṇḍavas,
amply assisted in his endeavour
by his heroic ranks.

4 Wishing the welfare of your son,
the two Avanti princes Vinda and Anuvinda
angrily wounded Virāṭa
with ten arrows.

5 Mahārāja, facing the two heroes
famed for their valour,
Virāṭa fought them and their followers
with equal valour.

6 It was a horrible clash between the two:
A bloody fight, as between a lion and two elephants.

7 The mahā-powerful son of Yajñasena wounded
Bāhlīka
With horrendous bone-and-marrow-piercing arrows.

8 Bāhlīka, roused to extreme anger,
wounded the son of Yajñasena
with nine knotted, stone-sharpened,
gold-winged shafts.

9 Arrows, lances and spears everywhere
on the battlefield –
fear in the hearts of weaklings,
and joy in the hearts of heroes.

10 The sky and the four quarters were shrouded with
arrows:
Nothing was clearly visible, all was a blur.

11 Govāsana of the Śibis fought Kāśī's mahā-chariot-
hero son,
As an elephant locks strength with another elephant.

[VII:96:12-21]

Transcreated by P. Lal

12 Inspired-to-wrath rājā Bāhlīka fought
Draupadī's five sons,
all mahā-chariot-heroes; shining,
like the mind battling the five senses.

13 The five princes, O excellent hero,
shot arrows at him,
like sense-objects riddling the flesh
with ceaseless temptations.

14 Your son Duḥśāsana wounded the Vṛṣṇi Sātyaki
With nine sharp knotted arrows.

15 Assailed by the powerful mahā-bowman Duḥśāsana,
Truly illustrious Sātyaki lost consciousness.

16 But he quickly recovered,
the hero of the Vṛṣṇis,
and pinned down your mahā-chariot-hero son
with ten *kaṅka*-shafts.

17 O rājā, the two magnificent heroes,
riddled with shafts,
stood on the field like two blossoming
*kiṁśuka*-flame-trees.

18 Pierced with the shafts of Kuntibhoja,
wrathful Alambuṣa
also looked like a splendid *kiṁśuka*
ablaze with flowers.

19 Standing facing your heroic warriors,
the rākṣasa Alambuṣa,
yelling his war-cry, shrouded Kuntibhoja
with swift steel arrows.

20 The soldiers stood on the battlefield
witnessing the clash of the heroes,
like the ancient clash
of Śakra-Indra and Jambha.

21 Mādrī's twin sons, Nakula and Sahadeva,
livid with anger, O Bharata,
assailed their long-standing foe Śakuni
with their arrows.

22 O rājā, it was mahā-gruesome,
that fearful carnage,
sparked by you,
and fanned by Karṇa.

23 Kept lit by the anger-rooted hatred
of your sons, O rājā,
the conflagration was about to consume
the whole world.

24 The arrows of Nakula and Sahadeva
forced Śakuni to retreat.
He lost all sense of duty,
his valour faded.

25 The mahā-chariot-hero twin sons of Mādrī,
seeing him run,
like two clouds a hill,
drenched him with arrows.

26 Wounded with sharply-knotted arrows,
Subala's son Śakuni
drove his swift horses for shelter
in Droṇa's ranks.

27 With no more than half his normal speed,
the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca,
famed for heroism,
rushed upon the rākṣasa Alāyudha.

28 The battle the two rākṣasas fought
was awe-inspiring,
like the ancient battle, O mahārāja,
between Rāma and Rāvaṇa.

29 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira initially wounded
the Madra ruler Śalya
with fifty arrows,
and then with seven more.

30 O king, the battle fought by them was wondrous,
like the mahā-battle in the past
between the rājā of the gods Indra
and Śambara.

31 Your three sons – Vikarṇa, Viviṁśati,
and Citrasena –
remained with their mahā-armies,
and battled with Bhīmasena.

SECTION NINETY-SEVEN



Sañjaya continued:

1 In that fierce horripilating battle, the Pāṇḍavas attacked
The Kauravas who had been split into three segments.

2 Bhīma chose to confront mahā-muscled Jalasaṁdha,
And Yudhiṣṭhira with his forces attacked Kṛtavarman.

3 Mahārāja, arrow-ray-showering sun-radiant
Dhṛṣṭadyumna confronted Droṇa in that battle.

4 And so the battle continued, with the infuriated archers
Of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas eager to clash.

5 In that mahā-fearful carnage, as the warriors battled
bravely,
Challenging each other to single combat,

6 Powerful Droṇa fought with the powerful Pāñcāla
prince;
His arrow-volleys filled all with profound wonder.

7 Decapitated by the Pāñcāla prince
and by Droṇa,
so many heads littered the field
like mutilated forest-lotuses.

8 Every division of brave warriors was littered
With uniforms, ornaments, flags, armours and weapons.

9 Golden blood-stained coats of mail looked
Like cloud-clusters pierced by lightning-flashes.

10 Stretching their four arms'-length-long bows,
The mahā-chariot-heroes killed elephants, horses and
men with winged shafts.

11 In that clash between mahatma heroes, on the field
Lay scattered swords, shields, bows, heads, and armours.

12 In that horrendous clash, mahārāja,
Countless headless bodies stood upright on the field.

13 Vultures, *kaṅkas*, crows, jackals,
O honour-bestowing monarch,
and other flesh-devouring beasts
roamed the field.

14 O king!
They bit at flesh
Drank blood
Pulled at hair
Pecked at marrow

15 Dragged away bodies
And limbs and heads
Of dead warriors
And horses and elephants.

16 Skilled in weapons-craft and warfare, eager to fight,
Eager to win glory, the warriors battled fiercely.

17 They roamed on the field,
expertly wielding their swords.
With darts, lances, javelins, spears,
tridents and battle-axes,

18 With maces and spiked clubs
and many other weapons,
and with bare arms, the angry warriors
butchered each other.

19 Chariot-heroes fought chariot-heroes, soldiers fought soldiers,
Horse-warriors engaged horse-warriors, elephants elephants.

20 Musth elephants, in a frenzy,
trumpeting angrily,
killed other elephants,
as they do in sport arenas.

21 O lord of the earth, none showed compassion
in that fierce battle
in which Dhṛṣṭadyumna drove his horses
to tangle with Droṇa's.

22 His pigeon-white horses clashed
with Droṇa's russet ones;
swift as wind, they looked magnificent
in the confusion.

23 O rājā, the horses dazzled like lightning-shot clouds–
The pigeon-white ones locked with the crimson ones.

24 Seeing Droṇa advancing towards him,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna cast aside his bow,
and stood ready
with a sword and mace.

25 Slayer-of-foes Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
son of Pṛṣata,
performed the difficult feat
of jumping inside Droṇa's chariot.

26 He balanced himself now on the yokes,
now on the joints,
now behind the horses,
as the warriors applauded loudly.

27 He stood, sword in hand,
on the backs of the red horses,
while Droṇa tried vainly to strike him.
A wonderful feat!

28 That leap of Dhṛṣṭadyumna from his chariot
to Droṇa's to kill Droṇa
was like the swoop of a forest hawk
on a scrap of meat.

29 With a hundred arrows Droṇa sliced
the hundred-moon-emblemed shield,
and with ten more he shattered
the sword of Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

30 With sixtyfour shafts the hero killed
Dhṛṣṭadyumna's horses,
with two *bhalla*-arrows he sliced his flag,
umbrella, and two wheel-protectors.

31 Then, swiftly, he fixed
a life-annihilating arrow,
like Vajra-dhara Indra's thunderbolt,
bowstring pulled up to his ear.

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32 But Sātyaki intercepted that arrow
with fourteen sharp shafts
and shredded it, and saved Dhṛṣṭadyumna
from the ācārya.

33 O gracious monarch! He was trapped,
like a deer cornered by a lion,
but Śini's descendant saved the Pāñcāla
from Droṇa.

34 Seeing Sātyaki rescue the Pāñcāla prince
in the thick of battle,
Droṇa swiftly attacked him
with twentysix arrows.

35 Śini's grandson Sātyaki countered
with twentysix sharp shafts
aimed at the chest of Droṇa,
annihilator of the Sṛñjaya heroes.

36 Seeing the Sātvata hero Sātyaki
confronting Droṇa,
the victory-eager Pāñcāla chariot heroes
sped Dhṛṣṭadyumna to safety.

## SECTION NINETY-EIGHT

Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:

1 "Tell me, Sañjaya, after the neutralisation of Droṇa's shaft
And the rescue of Dhṛṣṭadyumna by the Vṛṣṇis hero
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,

2 What did the magnificent bowman,
the infuriated all-weapons-expert Droṇa
do to the grandson of Śini,
who was a lion among men?"

3 His wide-open mouth like a taut bow
(replied Sañjaya),
*nārāca*-shafts his teeth, whetted arrows his fangs,
red-eyed, hot-breathing,

4 Like a massive snake, anger-venomed,
brave Droṇa,
in terrible wrath,
pulled swiftly by his red horses,

5 Which seemed to soar skywards
to the highest mountains,
sped towards Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
shooting gold-winged shafts.

6 Resistless Droṇa-cloud!
Raining arrow-showers!
Thunder its chariot-wheels!
Stretched bow its sky-arc!

7 *Nārāca*-arrows its lightning-flashes!
*Śakti*-spears and swords its rumbling!
Anger its furious wind!
Horses its wind-velocity!

8 Seeing it advancing towards him,
the hostile-town-subduing
brave grandson of Śini smiled
and ordered his charioteer:

9 "Against this brave Brahmin
who rejects his sva-karma caste-duty,
supports the Dhārtarāṣṭrans,
and dispels their rājā's sorrow,

10 Who is the ācārya of the sons
of the rājā,
and rates his bravery high,
cheerfully advance your swift horses!"

11 The excellent, swift, silver-skinned horses
of Sātyaki, descendant of Madhu,
sped towards Droṇa
to do battle.

12 The two foe-oppressors –
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki and Droṇa –
engaged in a duel, shooting thousands
of shafts at each other.

13 The two foe-oppressors-men shrouded the sky with nets of arrows;
Those two heroes blinded the ten directions with arrow-volleys.

14 Like two clouds at summer-end drenching earth, they shot arrows:
No sun could shine then, no wind could blow.

15 So many arrows blocked out the sky, a thick profound darkness
Took over, a troubling and warrior-wearying gloom.

16 When the arrows of Droṇa and Śini's grandson, experts
In swift-shooting weapons, had darkened the world,

17 There was no respite in the continuous shooting.
The noise of the clash of their arrow-volleys

18 Resembled the noise of Indra's thunderbolt.
And the heroic warriors, pierced by *nārācas*, looked

19 Like fiercely poisonous snakes, bitten by other snakes.
The noise of their palm-slaps and twanging bows

20 Was like that of lightning repeatedly hitting mountain peaks.
Rājā, the chariots of these heroes, their horses and charioteers,

21 Pierced with gold-winged shafts, were a splendid sight.
Lord of men, the gold-winged, straight-coursing *nārācas* –

22 A horrendous downpour of venomous sloughed-off snakes.
The umbrellas and flags of both warriors were shredded.

23 Blood smeared the bodies of these victory-hungry heroes.
Drenched in blood, resembling two rutting elephants,

24 They wounded each other with life-annihilating arrows
Battle-cries, shouts, roars, conch-peals and *dundubhi*-drums

25 Suddenly stopped, mahārāja; no one uttered a word:
The warriors fell silent and withdrew from battle.

26 Curious, they stood and watched
the terrifying duel;
chariot-heroes, elephant-riders, horsemen
and foot-soldiers

27 Surrounded the two heroes, and watched transfixed.
The ranks of elephants and horses also stood still,

28 As did the ranks of chariots, all equipped for battle.
Adorned with pearls and corals, jewels and gold

29 With flagstaffs, ornaments and golden armour,
War-flags, expensive caparisons of elephants, fine
blankets,

30 With glittering, whetted weapons, gold and silver yak-tails,
The warriors on the backs and necks of horses and
dephants,

31 The elephants' heads garlanded and tusks festooned,
Like flocks-of-cranes-fireflies-rainbows-lightning-flashes,

32 Beautified cloud-masses at the end of summer,
Our warriors, and Yudhiṣṭhira's warriors, witnessed

33 That duel between Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki and mahātmā
Droṇa.
Arriving there in sky-chariots, the Brahmā-and-Soma-
led gods,

34 And Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Vidyādharas and huge reptiles
Witnessed the duel. The to-and-fro martial manoeuvres

35 Of the two lions-among-men stupefied the watchers.
With tremendous dexterity of hand, the two heroes,

36 Droṇa and Sātyaki, slashed each other with arrows.
Sātyaki of the Dāśārhas sliced with his sturdy shafts
mahā-radiant Droṇa's

37 Swift feathered arrows – and his bow as well.
In less time than it takes to blink, Bhāradvāja-Droṇa
strung another;

38 But Sātyaki shredded that also. Unperturbed,
Droṇa swiftly strung yet another bow.

39 No sooner was a bow readied to shoot
than Sātyaki sliced it –
a hundred times! A magnificent feat
on the battelfield –

40 So swift, impossible to tell when strung and when sliced.
Seeing this unbelievable display, Droṇa,

41 O Indra-among-rājās,
wondered about Sātyaki:
*Such weapons-skill only Balarāma, Kārtavīrya,*
*Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,*

42 *And lion among-men Bhīṣma possess.*
*This is the valour*
*of the Sātvata hero.*
Twice-born Droṇa pūjā-praised Sātyaki.

43 The other gods also, led by Vāsava-Indra,
honoured Sātyaki, along with twice-born Droṇa,
who thought Sātyaki's skill
equalled Vāsava-Indra's.

44 O lord of the earth,
neither the gods nor the gandharvas
had ever seen such brilliant dexterity
as was shown by Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,

45 But they, as well as the Siddhas and Cārāṇas,
knew of Droṇa's feats.
Lifting another bow,
Kṣatriya-crushing Droṇa,

46 All-weapons-expert hero, nocked missiles
in its string, O Bharata.
But Sātyaki neutralised Droṇa's missiles
with his māyā,

47 And wounded him with super-sharp arrows –
a breathtaking feat!
Witnessing that wonder –
a feat impossible by others –

48 A feat of yogic finesse –
your discriminating warriors pūjā-praised it.
Whatever weapon Droṇa chose to shoot,
Sātyaki shot the same.

[VII:98:49-57; 99:1]

Transcreated by P. Lal

49 Mahārāja, seeing this,
foe-harassing ācārya Droṇa
fought cautiously. However, angered,
the master of Dhanurveda

50 Invoked a divine weapon in order
to kill Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki.
Anticipating that mahā-horrendous
foe-liquidating fire-missile,

51 A celestial weapon, mahā-bowman Sātyaki
invoked the Vāruṇa-weapon.
Seeing the two combatants using such weapons,
the warriors cried "Hai! Hai!"

52 The coursers of the air stopped flying in the sky.
The Vāruṇa-water and Āgneya-fire missiles were
nocked;

53 The radiant orb of the sun dipped below the horizon.
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira, and Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma,

54 And Nakula and Sahadeva sped to rescue Sātyaki.
Others, led by Dhṛṣṭadyumna, and Virāṭa and the
Kekayas,

55 Along with the Matsyas and Śālvas, attacked Droṇa.
Meanwhile, thousands of princes led by Duḥśāsana,

56 Rushed to help Droṇa, O rājā,
who was now foe-encircled,
and the Pāṇḍava-Kaurava battle
began afresh.

57 Dust-cloud and arrow-net. All darkness-shrouded.
In that deep haze, they fought, wildly, disregarding
war-rules.
A ruthless, inhuman slaughter.

## SECTION NINETY-NINE

1 While Droṇa and Pāṇḍavas clashed
the sun set behind the western hills,
and dust obscured the dying rays
(continued Sañjaya)

2 Some soldiers stood indifferently by,
others kept fighting;
Some re-grouped and attacked; some won.
The day ended.

3 While the victory-seeking soldiers fought,
Vāsudeva-Krishna and Arjuna
advanced to the location
of Saindhava-Jayadratha.

4 Kuntī's son Arjuna with sharp arrows
cleared a path,
and Janārdana-Krishna expertly
drove the chariot through.

5 O lord of the earth, wherever mahātmā Arjuna's
chariot sped,
The enemy troops wavered and let it pass.

6 Krishna of the Dāśārhas showed brilliant heroic
skill
As he manoeuvred the chariot in maṇḍala-patterns.

7 Excellently crafted arrows, with Arjuna's name
engraved,
Like Kāla-doom-fire radiant, catgut-tied, thick,
swift, far-hitting,

8 Some of bamboo, some of iron, life-shattering shafts –
They, along with birds of prey, drank the warriors'
life-bloods.

9 Arjuna's arrows, shot as he stood in his chariot,
sped a *krośa*
Ahead; his chariot reached while they were
shredding his foe.

10 Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna drove the horses with Garuḍa's
swiftness;
The speed filled the whole world with stupefied
wonder.

11 O lord of the earth, the chariot of Tapana the sun
was not as swift,
Nor the chariots of Indra, Rudra-Śiva, and
Vaiśravaṇa-Kubera.

12 Rājā, never had anyone's chariot moved so fast in battle
As did Arjuna's flashing by like a quick thought.

13 Speeding his chariot into the heart of the battle,
Foe-crushing Keśava-Krishna plunged inside the army ranks.

14 Piercing the chariot-ranks, hungry, thirsty and tired,
Yet the horses of Arjuna advanced, overcoming their hardships.

15 They were attacked by countless warriors with various weapons.
They manoeuvred in a variety of maṇḍala-patterns,

16 Sweeping over the dead bodies of horses and elephants,
Corpses of warriors, and remains of shattered chariots.

17 Rājā, the excessive urging of horses on the battlefield
Made even the swiftest steeds slow down.

18 Seizing this chance, O king, the two heroic Avanti brothers,
Reinforced by warriors, swooped upon Arjuna's tired horses.

19 They wounded Arjuna with sixtyfour, and Janārdana-Krishna
With seventy arrows, and their horses with seventy–and exulted.

20 Mahārāja! Anatomy-expert Arjuna wounded both with nine knotted shafts,
All of them designed to rip open the body's vital parts.

21 Equally infuriated, the two heroes, shouting leonine war-cries,
Showered Bībhatsu-Arjuna and Keśava-Krishna with arrows.

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22 The white-horsed hero, with two broad-headed *bhalla*-shafts,
Sliced the golden flagpoles and bows of the two princes.

23 Roused to fever-pitch of anger, they lifted two new bows,
And harassed Pāṇḍu's son with fresh arrow-volleys.

24 But Pāṇḍu's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna, no less furious,
Sliced their bows again with two more arrows.

25 And with golden-winged, stone-sharpened shafts
He killed their horses, charioteers, and wheel-protectors.

26 With a razor-headed shaft he decapitated the elder brother,
Who collapsed on the earth like a storm-uprooted tree.

27 Illustrious Anuvinda, seeing Vinda killed, alighted
From the horseless chariot and, whirling a mace,

28 The powerful hero rushed towards Arjuna to take revenge.
The mahā-chariot-hero seemed to dance on the battlefield.

29 Incensed Anuvinda hit Madhusūdana-Krishna on the head
With his mace; Krishna remained as firm as Maināka mountain.

30 With six arrows, Arjuna sliced off his legs, arms, scalp
And head; mutilated, he fell like a fragmented slab of rock.

31 Rājā, seeing the two heroes killed, their infuriated followers
Swooped on Arjuna, shooting thousands of arrows at him.

32 O bull-brave Bharata, shattering them with his
own arrows,
Arjuna shone, like a forest-consuming fire in
summer time.

33 With great difficulty Dhanañjaya-Arjuna steered
through their ranks,
As radiant as the sun emerging through cloud-masses.

34 O bull-brave Bharata! Seeing him, the Kauravas
panicked; then, delighted,
They attacked him ferociously from all sides.

35 They knew he was tired, that Saindhava-Jayadratha
was far away,
And so, with loud lion-roars, they encircled Arjuna.

36 Seeing them agitated,
bull-among-men Arjuna smiled
and said to Krishna,
the descendant of the Dāśārhas:

37 "Our horses are shaft-stricken and tired;
the Sindhu ruler is far from here.
What do you suggest
we do now?

38 Tell me, Krishna, in plain language.
You are the wisest, always.
With you as their eyes,
the Pāṇḍavas can rout their foes.

39 Let me say what I think now
needs to be done, Mādhava-Krishna.
Unyoke the horses, and remove the arrows
from their bodies."

40 Keśava-Krishna replied to Pārtha-Arjuna,
"You are right.
Your views are the same as mine
in this matter."

41 Arjuna said, "Keśava, I will block
their whole army.
Please do what needs to be done
at this time."

42 Alighting from the seat of the chariot
(Sanjaya continued),
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna, Gāṇḍīva-bow in hand,
stood like an unmoving hill.

43 Seeing Dhanañjaya-Arjuna on the ground, the Kauravas,
Shouting fiercely, seized this chance to pounce on him.

44 With a huge division of chariots,
they encircled the solitary hero,
twanging their bows
and shooting indiscriminately.

45 Burning with anger,
they brandished their weapons;
like clouds the sun,
they obscured Arjuna with arrows.

46 Like elephants rushing on a lion, the chariot-hero Kṣatriyas
rushed on another bull-brave Kṣatriya,
brave-as-a-tiger Arjuna.

47 What a sight! – the splendid strength
of Pārtha-Arjuna's arms
angrily holding back the entire army
of the Kauravas!

48 He neutralised all the weapons
launched by his enemies,
and heroically harassed them
with countless arrows.

49 O lord of the earth, the friction of the shafts
continuously colliding
produced a massive conflagration
on the battlefield.

50 Riding horses spattered with blood,
supported
by musth, foe-crushing-elephants,
heavily-breathing contingents of soldiers,

51 Roused to fierce anger,
stood ready on the battlefield
eager for victory. It was a hot
and oppressive atmosphere.

52 Arrows its waves
Flags its whirlpools
Elephants its sharks
Foot-soldiers its countless fishes
Conches and *dundubhi*-drums its roar

53 Chariots its raging currents
Turbans of warriors its tortoises
Umbrellas and pennants its foam

54 Elephant-carcases its undersea rocks –
A vast impassable battlefield-ocean
Whose fury Pārtha-Arjuna kept in check
With his volleys of arrows.

55 So the battle raged.
"How is it (asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra)
That the entire Kaurava army of mine
Was unable to kill Pārtha-Arjuna on the ground
And Keśava-Krishna managing the horses?"

56 Arjuna frustrated the charioted warriors
(Replied Sañjaya) like a pious man
Rejecting words that defile sacred texts.

57 Pārtha-Arjuna on the ground overcame the warriors
the same way
Greed singly overcomes all the good guṇa-qualities
of a person.

58 Mahā-muscled Janārdana-Krishna
on the battlefield
turned to his dear friend,
paragon-of-men Arjuna, saying:

59 "There is no water here, Arjuna,
for the horses.
They don't want to be bathed;
they are thirsty."

60 "Here is the water!" So saying,
Arjuna shot a missile in the earth
and created a delightful lake
for the horses to drink.

61 Swans and ducks and *cakravākas*
Beautified the lake of pure water
And exquisite full-blown lotuses –

62 A deep lake, with tortoises and fishes,
And visited by ṛṣis.
Nārada came to see that instant lake.

63 A wonder-worker like Tvaṣṭā himself,
the son of Viśvakarma!
Pārtha-Arjuna created an arrow-hall,
with arrows for beams, pillars and ceiling.

64 Seeing the hall created on the spot
by mahātmā Pārtha Arjuna,
Govinda-Krishna smiled:
"*Sādhu! Sādhu!* Splendid! Splendid!"

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED

Sañjaya continued:

1 After the mahātmā son of Kuntī
had created the lake,
held in the check the enemy warriors,
and materialised the arrow-hall,

2 The mahā-radiant son of Vasudeva
alighted from the chariot,
and unharnessed the horses
wounded by *kaṅka*-feathered shafts.

3 Seeing a wondrous spectacle
never seen before,
Siddhas, Cāraṇas and the soldiers
profusely praised Arjuna.

4 A remarkable experience!
Kuntī's son standing on the ground,
surrounded by the mahā-chariot-heroes
of your army.

5 Hordes of chariots, elephants and horses
rushed at Pārtha-Arjuna,
but, unafraid, he turned every attack
to his advantage.

6 The hostile rulers rained volleys of arrows
on Vāsavi-Arjuna
But the foe-killing dharmātmā son of Indra
felt no pain.

7 Valiant Pārtha-Arjuna absorbed arrows,
spears and maces
like an ocean absorbing
hundreds of inflowing rivers.

8 With his incredible energy,
Pārtha-Arjuna swallowed,
as it were, the excellent arrows
of the attacking Indra-like earth-lords.

9 Mahāraja, even the Kauravas pūjā-praised the
mahā-wonderful feats
Displayed by Pārtha-Arjuna and Vāsudeva-Krishna.

10 Has anything more remarkable
ever taken place, or will,
than the mid-battle unharnessing of horses,
by Pārtha-Arjuna and Govinda-Krishna?

11 Both incomparable heroes,
by displaying indomitable confidence
and inexhaustible energy,
instilled awe in all who saw them.

12 O Bharata! -Krishna, smiling,
stood gracefully in the arrow-hall
created by Arjuna,
as if he was in the midst of women.

13 And then, O lord of the world,
before the eyes of all your warriors,
lotus-eyed Puṣkarekṣaṇa-Krishna
guided his horses into the hall.

14 Skilled in the art of horse-care,
Krishna alleviated
their tiredness, their pain, their trembling,
their cuts and bruises.

15 Gently he removed the arrows
from their bodies;
he massaged them, he walked them,
he fed them water.

16 He washed them, he made them drink,
he soothed away their fatigue,
and happily re-harnessed them
to the splendid chariot.

17 Then mahā-energetic Śauri-Krishna,
all-weapons-expert hero,
with Arjuna, climbed into the chariot
and drove off speedily.

18 Seeing the mahā-chariot-hero's chariot
mobile again,
pulled by thirst-quenched horses,
the Kauravas became depressed.

19 Breathing like snakes with snapped fangs,
O rājā, they exclaimed:
"*Dhik! Dhik!* Shame! Shame! They are gone –
Pārthā-Arjuna and Krishna!"

20 Your warriors, seeing the hair-raising feat,
said to each other:
"Heroes! This cannot be!
We will chase them and catch them!"

21 In a single chariot, clad in armour,
facing the Kṣatriyas,
the two played with our warriors
like children with toys.

22 We did our very best, but those two
annihilators of foes escaped,
with their superior war-skill,
eluding the rājās.

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23 As in the past, in the god-antigod war,
Indra did, O rājā,
when eager to kill Jambha –
and Viṣṇu did with the Dānavas.

24 Seeing then speeding away, your warriors said:
"Kauravas,
get ready quickly to wipe out Krishna
and diadem-decked Kirīṭin-Arjuna.

25 After harnessing his horses,
the Dāśārha hero is racing
towards Jayadratha, humiliating us
in front of our archers."

26 O rājā, other rulers also,
seeing this mahā-astonishing feat,
a feat never witnessed before,
murmured among themselves:

27 "All these soldiers, rājā Dhṛtarāṣṭra himself,
the whole earth
are on the brink of doom –
through Duryodhana's fault.

28 Yet the rājā seems to be
unaware of this."
Such, O Bharata, were the thoughts
of other Kṣatriyas:

29 "Let ignorant and misguided Dhṛtarāṣṭra
prepare the obsequies,
for the Sindhu-ruler is about to enter
the realm of Yama."

30 Just as the sun was about to set,
Pāṇḍava-Arjuna sped towards Jayadratha,
in a chariot driven by horses
whose thirst had been quenched.

31 Impossible to check death-dealing Doom
when the end approaches;
impossible for your warriors to check
mahā-muscled all-weapons-expert Arjuna.

32 Like a lion spreading havoc
in a herd of deer,
foe-afflicting Arjuna routed your army
in order to kill Jayadratha.

33 Krishna of the Dāśārhas,
blowing his cloud-coloured Pāñcajanya conch,
drove his horses at top speed
into the Kaurava ranks.

34 So swift was the chariot that the arrows
shot by Arjuna
fell behind him, as the wind-swift horses
raced ahead.

35 Livid with anger, many hostile kings
and other Kṣatriyas
encircled Dhanañjaya-Arjuna as he procceded
to bear down on Jayadratha.

36 As bull-brave Arjuna briefly
slowed his chariot down,
the Kṣatriyas rushed at him in that mahā-clash,
with Duryodhana attacking from behind.

37 But the sight
of that fearful ape-bannered chariot,
with cloud-rumbling wheels, flag aflutter,
dispirited them.

38 Clouds of dust darkened the sun,
and the shaft-struck warriors
did not even dare to look
at the twin Krishnas on the field.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED ONE

1 Seeing Vāsudeva-Krishna
and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna break through,
after decimating many ranks,
your warriors retreated in fear.

2 But after some time,
anger overcame their bitter shame;
with renewed confidence in their courage,
they attacked Dhanañjaya-Arjuna

3 But these anger-and-revenge-filled heroes
failed to return,
like rivers that enter the ocean
and do not return.

4 Like negative thinkers turning away
from the wisdom of the Vedas,
they turned away from battle,
and their cowardice took them to hell.

5 Speeding through clusters of chariots,
the two bull-brave heroes
looked like the sun and moon
escaping the jaws of Rāhu.

6 Their exhaustion dispelled,
they tore through the huge net
of enemy warriors, like two fishes
slipping through a catch.

7 The two mahātmās slipping through Droṇa's
uncrossable, arrow-blocked array,
were like two suns surviving
the doomsday of Kāla.

8 Piercing through
the life-endangering hail of weapons,
the two mahātmā warriors darkened the sky
with their weapons.

9 Looking like two who have survived
a raging conflagration,
like two fish who have escaped the jaws
of a *makara*-monster,
they churned the Kuru-ocean
like *makaras* troubling the water-waves.

10 Your sons and warriors had thought
Arjuna and Krishna
would never be able to elude
the ranks of Droṇa.

11 But seeing the mahā-radiant heroes
piercing Droṇa's ranks,
they doubted, mahārāja, if the Sindhu ruler
could be saved.

12 O rājā! Till now they had hopes
for the rājā of the Sindhus,
thinking, *prabhu*-lord, the two Krishnas
could not escape Droṇa and Hārdikya-
Kṛtavarman.

13 Mahārāja, the two foe-scorchers
destroyed their hopes
by eluding the uncrossable ranks
of Droṇa and the Bhoja Kṛtavarman.

14 Seeing them flash past like two fierce fires,
your warriors, dispirited,
lost all hope of seeing
the rājā of the Sindhus alive.

15 Making others fear, themselves fearless,
Krishna and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
began to discuss the strategy
of killing Jayadratha:

16 "Six of the finest mahā-chariot-heroes
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's army
are protecting Jayadratha.
But once we glimpse him, he is doomed.

17 Even if Śakra-Indra were to turn up
with his hosts of gods
to protect him, we will kill him."
The two Krishnas were of one mind.

18 This is the way mahā-muscled Krishna
and Arjuna planned
the end of the Sindhu rājā.
Your sons were deeply disturbed.

19 They looked like a pair of elephants,
the two foe-crushers,
swift-treading and thirst-quenched
after a desert march.

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20 Like traders who have safely crossed
a tiger-lion-and-elephant-infested hill tract,
they manifested themselves,
beyond death and decay.

21 Your warriors looked at their untiring,
unfading faces;
and seeing them so,
they burst into loud lamentation.

22 Escaping from snake-venomous
and fire-blazing Droṇa,
and all the kings, the two looked
like two radiant suns.

23 Sailing safely over the oceanic ranks
of Droṇa's warriors,
the two foe-crushers were as happy as those
who cross an ocean smoothly.

24 Escaping the thick arrow-showers
of Droṇa and Hārdikya Kṛtavarman,
Krishna and Arjuna shone with the radiance
of Indra and Agni.

25 Studded with the shafts of Bhāradvāja-Droṇa,
and bleeding profusely,
the two Krishnas glowed
like flowering-*karṇikāra*-mountains.

26 Crossing that huge lake
where Droṇa was the shark,
darts were venomous snakes,
*makaras* the shafts,
Kṣatriyas the deep waters,

27 Emerging out of the Droṇa-weapons-cloud,
thundering with bow-twang and palm-stroke,
mace-and-sword-lightning,
the two rose like sun and moon in darkness.

28 It appeared then that the two heroes
had safely swum
five swollen-with-monsoon
mahā-perilous rivers:
the Irāvati, Vipāsā,
Vitastā, Śatadru
and Candrabhāgā,
to reach the sixth, the Sindhu.

29 And because they had successfully countered
the weapons of Droṇa,
all looked upon the two Krishnas
as invincible bowmen.

30 Jayadratha was near them;
they looked at him with intent to kill him,
like two tigers about to slaughter
a *ruru*-deer.

31 Mahārāja, their complexions glowed
with such intensity
that your warriors considered Jayadratha
as good as dead.

32 Sitting side by side,
pink-eyed and mahā-muscled Krishna
and Pāṇḍava Arjuna spotted Jayadratha,
and joyfully screamed their war-cries.

33 O rājā! The dazzle of Śauri-Krishna
holding the chariot-reins
and Pārtha-Arjuna the bow,
resembled that of the fire and the sun.

34 They deceived Drona's ranks,
they saw the Sindhu ruler,
and they exulted,
like hawks sighting a chunk of flesh.

35 Seeing the ruler of the Sindhus near,
livid with anger they pounced on him,
like a pair of hawks
on a slice of flesh.

36 Seeing Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna
and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna advancing,
your son Duryodhana
prepared to protect Jayadratha.

37 Rājā Duryodhana, expert in horses,
donned the armour given by Droṇa,
and charioted speedily, O *prabhu*-lord,
to save Jayadratha.

38 O lord of men! Outspeeding mahā-bowmen
Krishna and Pārtha-Arjuna,
your son turned back and faced
lotus-eyed Puṇḍarīkākṣa-Krishna.

39 Seeing your son outstrip Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
your warriors
celebrated by joyfully sounding
a multitude of musical instruments.

40 Duryodhana faced the two Krishnas,
and your warriors
shouted lion-roars that blended
with the blare of conches.

41 And when they saw your son advancing
to fight Arjuna, O *prabhu*-lord,
the fire-fierce soldiers
protecting the Sindhu rājā also rejoiced.

42 O rājā! Seeing Duryodhana and his followers
outspeed Arjuna,
Krishna said the following apt words
to Arjuna.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWO

Vāsudeva-Krishna said:

1 "Look, Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
Suyodhana-Duryodhana has overtaken us!
I think he is exceptional.
No chariot-warrior equals him.

2 He shoots far-reaching arrows.
Near-invincible in battle,
all-weapons-expert, mahā-archer,
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's mahā-powerful son,

3 Reared in every possible comfort,
excellently accomplished,
he hates the Pāṇḍavas, his relatives;
his mahā-chariot-heroes admire him.

4 That is why, defectless one,
you must now fight him.
Victory or defeat lies with him
in this war-gamble.

5 Pārtha-Arjuna! Spit on him the poison
of your long-suppressed anger!
This mahā-chariot hero is the root
of all Pāṇḍava ills.

6 He's within your arrow-range.
Think of your own welfare.
Why has rājā Duryodhana come at last
to battle with you?

7 Your good fortune, Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
he is within your arrow-range!
Do your best now to see
that he does not escape with his life.

8 Swollen by prosperity,
his pride has never been humbled.
O bull-among-men, he knows nothing
of your valour in battle.

9 Pārtha-Arjuna, the three worlds,
the gods, anti-gods, humans
cannot defeat you. How can this man,
this single Suyodhana-Duryodhana?

10 It is your great good luck, Pārtha-Arjuna,
to have him so near your chariot.
Kill him, O mahā-muscled one,
as Puraṁdara-Indra killed Vṛtra.

11 Defectless one,
he has always songht to ruin you.
He cheated and defeated
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira at dice.

12 O bestower of honours,
you have never done harm to any;
yet this ill-minded one
has perpetually done you harm.

13 So, Pārtha-Arjuna, resolve now,
nobly, without hesitation,
to kill his selfish un-āryan scoundrel
filled with hate for you.

14 Son of Pāṇḍu, recall the loss
of your kingdom by deceit,
your forest-exile, Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī's anguish –
and show your prowess today!

15 Your good luck
he is within arrow-range –
good luck he is facing you today
trying to frustrate your hopes.

16 Your good luck that he knows
he must fight you today;
your good luck you will win today,
even if you may not wish it.

17 Therefore, Pārtha-Arjuna,
kill this Dhārtarāṣṭran family-despoiler,
as Indra killed Jambha
in the god-antigod battle.

18 Killing him, rout his leaderless army!
Destroy the very root of these rascals!
Perform the final blood-bath
of this yajña!
Let this be the *avabhṛtha*-bath
of this sacrificial battle!"

19 Pārtha-Arjuna replied to Krishna,
"So be it. I will do it.
Forget everything else,
lead me to Suyodhana-Duryodhana.

20 I will show my prowess in battle.
I will cut off his head.
Too long, without a thorn in his side,
has he enjoyed our kingdom.

21 I will redress the wrong done
to innocent Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī,
dragged by her hair.
This I promise, Mādhava-Krishna!

22 By killing Duryodhana in battle,
O Mādhava-Krishna,
I will free myself of all the sorrows
I have had to endure."

23 Conversing in this way, the two Krishnas,
filled with joy,
targeting lord-of-men Duryodhana,
urged their splendid white steeds.

24 O bull-brave honour-bestowing Bharata!
Your son saw them approach,
but showed no fear,
though he had ample reason to fear.

25 And as he rode to oppose Arjuna
and Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna,
the host of Kṣatriya warriors
praised his courage.

26 O lord of the world, seeing rājā Duryodhana
rushing forward,
all your soldiers also raised
a tremendous clamour –

27 Amidst that deafening roar
of the warring forces,
your son pressed forward
and blocked his enemy's progress.

28 Blocked by your splendid archer-son,
Kaunteya-Arjuna flamed in anger;
your foe-shattering son too
showed his wrath.

29 Seeing Duryodhana and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
exchanging their ire,
the fierce-looking rājās of both armies
stood still, watching.

30 Seeing Pārtha-Arjuna and Vāsudeva-Krishna
flaming with anger,
your son smiled; O honour-bestowing monarch,
eager for battle, he challenged them.

31 Krishna of the Dāśārha race
and Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
exultantly shouted, and blew fiercely
on their splendid conches.

32 Seeing the joyous enthusiasm on their faces,
the Kaurava warriors
realised the desperate situation,
and feared for the life of your son.

33 The Kauravas, and others as well,
were lost in grief,
and felt your son was being sacrificed
in a Vaiśvānara-fire.

34 Your soldiers, seeing Krishna
and Pāṇḍu's son exulting,
fearfully shouted, "The rājā is killed!
The rājā is killed!"

35 Duryodhana heard about the panic
in his ranks, and said:
"Do not worry.
I will kill the two Krishnas."

36 Saying this, lord-of-men Duryodhana,
hoping to win,
angrily turned to Pārtha-Arjuna,
and said to him:

37 "Pṛthā's son, if indeed you are
the son of Pāṇḍu,
show me the divine and earthly weapons
in which you are skilled.

38 If you and Keśava-Krishna
have strength, have valour,
prove them against me, today.
Show me the men you are!

39 Men speak of many feats by you
which we have never seen.
Show me the prowess that gets you
such praise from others!"

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED THREE

Sañjaya continued:

1 Saying this, the rājā pierced Arjuna
with three flesh-shredding shafts;
then he wounded Arjuna's horses
with four high-speed arrows.

2 He pierced Vāsudeva's son Krishna
with ten chest-slicing shafts;
with a *bhalla*-arrow he jerked
Krishna's whip to the ground.

3 Coolly, Pārtha-Arjuna swiftly fired
fourteen stone-whetted shafts
with multi-coloured feathers,
but they slipped off Duryodhana's armour.

4 Seeing this, Arjuna let loose
fourteen more arrows
of exquisite sharpness;
these also slipped of Duryodhana's armour.

5 Seeing all twenty-eight arrows
fall useless,
foe-crushing warrior Krishna
said to Arjuna:

6 "Pārtha-Arjuna, I have seen a sight
I never saw before –
like a hill moving! Winged arrows
shot by you – useless!

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7 O bull-brave Bharata!
Is there life in your Gāṇḍīva-bow?
Are your grasp and arm-strength
what they once were?

8 Is this not the final encounter
between you and your foe?
I am asking you this.
Give me a straight answer.

9 I see your arrows glance off
Duryodhana's chariot,
utterly useless, and I tell you,
I am dismayed.

10 Pārtha-Arjuna, what silliness is this –
arrows fearful like thunderbolts,
arrows that can slice an enemy's flesh,
futile, ineffective?"

11 "I suspect, Krishna," replied Arjuna,
"Droṇa has donned this armour
on Duryodhana. My weapons cannot
penetrate this armour.

12 This armour is charged with the energy
of all the three worlds, Krishna.
Only Droṇa knows the secret –
and I learnt it from him.

13 No arrows can pierce this armour,
O Govinda-Krishna.
Even Maghavat-Indra cannot pierce it
on the battlefield.

14 You know this, Krishna.
Why then are you confusing me?
What has happened in the three worlds,
what is happening now,

15 And what will happen in the future,
are all known to you.
Slayer-of-Madhu Krishna,
who knows this better than you?

16 The fact is, Krishna, that Duryodhana,
clad in armour by Droṇa,
does battle knowing full well
his armour is invincible.

17 But, Mādhava-Krishna, he does not know
what one wearing such armour should do.
He wears it like a woman
flaunting an unbecoming ornament.

18 So, Janārdana-Krishna, observe
my bow-skill and my arm-strength,
while I pierce
this armour-shielded Kaurava.

19 The lord of the gods Deveśa-Brahmā
gave this armour to Aṅgiras;
Aṅgiras gave it to Bṛhaspati,
who gave it to Puraṁdara-Indra.

20 The chief god gave it to me
with all its secrets.
Though divinely artifacted,
though forged by Brahmā himself,

21 It cannot shield this wicked wearer
from the arrows I shoot."
Sañjaya continued: Arjuna strung his bow
with mantra-charged arrows.

22 But even as he nocked the arrows
to his bow's centre –
arrows capable of pulverising
the most proficient warriors –

23 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman sliced them
with an all-baffling weapon.
Seeing his arrows severed from afar
by Veda-versed Aśvatthāman,

24 White-horse-vehicled Arjuna, astonished,
said to Keśava-Krishna:
"Janārdana-Krishna,
I cannot use these arrows twice.

25 If I do, they will kill me
and rout my army."
Duryodhana attacked the two Krishnas
with nine shafts each,

26 Resembling venomous snakes.
He showered Krishna and Pāṇḍava-Arjuna
with a deluge of arrows, O rājā,
on the battlefield.

27 Another fierce mahā-arrow-shower!
And your soldiers exulted,
and beat upon musical instruments
and shunted raucous war-cries.

28 Parthā-Arjuna angrily licked
the corners of his mouth.
He could find no part
of Duryodhana's body unexposed.

29 With sharp arrows resembling doomsday,
accurately shot,
Arjuna killed Duryodhana's horses
and his two flank-protectors.

30 That valiant warrior next sliced
Duryodhana's bow and leather gloves
Ambidexterous Savyasācī-Arjuna
fragmented his chariot.

31 Next, with two sharp arrows,
Arjuna grazed the palms
of Duryodhana who had been rendered
chariot-less.

32 Seizing this chance,
Kaunteya-Arjuna wounded the flesh
under his finger-nails. Torn with pain,
Duryodhana retreated.

33 Seeing sorely afflicted Duryodhana fleeing,
the expert archers of your army
rushed to protect him
from Arjuna's arrows.

34 With thousands of excellently equipped
chariots, elephants and horses,
they angrily surrounded
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's chariot.

35 Obscured with arrow-showers,
encircled by soldiers,
neither Arjuna, Krishna, nor their chariot
was visible.

36 With his weapons and his valour
Arjuna killed
hundreds of chariot-heroes and elephants.
Mutilated, many fled the field.

37 But they succeeded, though dead or half-dead,
in halting Arjuna's advance,
a full *krośa* away
from the encircling troops.

38 The virile Vṛṣṇi hero Krishna
quickly advised Arjuna:
"Stretch your bow tight,
while I blow my water-born conch."

39 With tremendous energy Arjuna stretched
his Gāṇḍīva-bow;
clapping loudly, he slaughtered his foes
with arrow showers.

40 His body covered with dust,
his face streaming sweat,
powerful Keśava-Krishna blew loudly
on his Pāñcajanya-conch.

41 Cupped through Krishna's palms,
the wind swooshed
through the womb of the conch
with terrifying force,
nearly disintegrating the worlds
of anti-gods, gods,
Lokapālas, and the midspace regions
of the universe.

42 The twang of the bow
    and the din of the conch
were such that all, strong or weak,
    collapsed on the ground.

43 Freed, Arjuna's chariot sped
    like a wind-propelled cloud.
Jayadratha's protectors and his followers
    flamed with anger.

44 Seeing Pārtha-Arjuna facing them,
    the protectors of the Sindhu-ruler
shouted
    till the very earth trembled.

45 Arrows whizzed; conches blew;
    the noise mingled
with the fierce lion-roars
    of your brave soldiers.

46 Hearing the cacophony created
    by your soldiers,
Vāsudeva-Krishna and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
    blew their own splendid conches.

47 O lord of the world! That mahā-vibration
    sped across the earth,
reverberating through hills, seas, islands
    and the underworld.

48 O best of the Bharatas!
    That sound filled the ten points
of the compass, and echoed
    through the Pāṇḍava and Kaurava ranks.

49 Seeing Krishna and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
    your chariot heroes were stunned,
but they rallied
    to show their prowess.

50 Your soldiers saw mahā-fourtune-favoured,
    mail-clad Krishna and Arjuna.
Infuriated, they attacked.
    An incredible spectacle!

SECTION ONE HUNDRED FOUR

1 Sañjaya continued: Seeing excellent Krishna
of the Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas
and excellent Arjuna of the Kuru dynasty,
your soldiers rushed
to confront them, vying to be the first.
Vijaya-Arjuna advanced also.

2 On gold-plated, loud wheel-rumbling
tiger-skin-covered mahā-chariots
they rushed, like resplendent fires lighting up
the points of the compass.

3 O lord of the earth!
Brandishing bows with gold-inlaid staves,
blindingly shining, shouting war-cries,
driving furious horses,

4 Bhūriśravas, Śala, Karṇa, Vṛṣasena, Jayadratha,
Kṛpa, the rājā of Madra, the excellent
chariot-hero son of Droṇa –

5 These eight maha-chariot-heroes illumined
the ten quarters,
devouring the sky with their-tiger-skin-covered
and gold moon-inlaid chariots.

6 Mail-clad, anger-fuming,
driving wheel-rumbling chariots
like growling clouds, they attacked Pārtha-Arjuna
with a deluge of arrows.

7 The finest pedigreed, vari-coloured,
swift-speeding horses
of these mahā-chariot-heroes
dazzled the sky's ten quarters.

8 Riding chariots pulled by swift horses
of different breeds –
from hill areas, from riverine tracts,
from the Sindhu territory –

9 The mahā-chariot-hero Kauravas, O rājā,
converged on the chariot
of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
eager to rescue your son.

10 Those splendid warriors raised
their massive conches, O rājā,
and filled sky, earth and ocean
with deafening blasts.

11 Finest even among all the gods,
Vāsudeva-Krishna and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
blew their finest
of all the world's conches.

12 Kaunteya-Arjuna blew the Devadatta,
Keśava-Krishna blew the Pāñcajanya.
Devadatta's noise,
produced by Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,

13 Cofounded earth, sky,
and the ten compass points.
The blast of the Pāñcajanya,
produced by Vāsudeva-Krishna,

14 Exceeding all other cacophonies,
encompassed sky and earth.
And while that awesome noise
continued to reverberate –

15 Bringing terror to the faint-hearted
and delight to the courageous –
and while the drums and the *jharjharas*
and the cymbals

16 And *mṛdaṅgas* blared in thousands,
O Indra-among-rājās,
many mahā-chariot-heroes,
Duryodhana's allies seeking his good,

17 Blazing with anger, unable to endure
the conches' cacophony –
these lords of the earth,
leading soldiers from many lands –

18 These mahā-chariot-heroes
blew their own conches,
huge instruments challenging the din
of Keśava-Krishna and Arjuna.

19 O radiant one! Harassed by the cacophony,
the chariot-heroes,
elephants and horses of your army
became mentally ill.

20 That huge congregation of warriors,
noise-bewildered,
looked like the thunder-riven sky
fallen on earth.

21 Rājā, that horrendous cacophony's echoes
suffused the quarters,
terrorising the soldiers with the fear
of the end of a yuga.

22 Then Duryodhana
and the eight mahā-chariot-hero rājās
surrounded Pāṇḍu's son
in order to protect Jayadratha.

23 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman wounded
Vasudeva's son Krishna
with seventy three arrows;
Arjuna with three *bhalla*-shafts;
and sliced Arjuna's flagstaff with five,
wounding his steeds too.

24 Seeing Janārdana-Krishna wounded,
infuriated Arjuna
attacked his enemy with a volley
of six hundred arrows.

25 Wounding Karṇa with ten arrows,
Vṛṣasena with three,
valiant Arjuna sliced Śalya's nocked bow
near the finger-grip.

26 Stringing another bow, Śalya recommenced
his assault on Pāṇḍu's son.
Bhūriśravas with three
gold-winged, stone-cut shafts,

27 Karṇa with thirty-two arroows,
Vārṣṇeya with seven,
Jayadratha with seventy-three
and Kṛpa with ten,

28 The rājā of Madra with ten arrows,
wounded Phālguna-Arjuna.
With a volley of sixty,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman faced Arjuna;

29 He attacked Vāsudeva-Krishna with twenty,
and Arjuna with five more.
Then that white-horsed tiger-among-men,
whose charioteer was Krishna,

30 Wounded all his combatants
with amazing skill of hand;
wounding Karṇa with twelve arrows,
Vṛṣasena with three,

31 He sliced once again Śalya's bow
near the handle.
Wounding Somadatta's son with three arrows,
and Śalya with ten,

32 He pierced Droṇa's son with eight arrows,
sharp and fire-tongued.
He wounded Gotama's son Kṛpa with twentyfive,
the Sindhu-ruler with a hundred.

33 Again he wounded Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
with seventy arrows.
Infuriated, Bhūriśravas sliced the whip
held by Hari-Krishna;

34 With a volley of seventy-three arrows
He succeeded in wounding Arjuna.

35 Flaming with rage, white-horsed Arjuna
slashed his foes with hundreds of arrows,
like a storm of mahā-velocity
scattering masses of clouds.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FIVE

1 "Sañjaya," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"describe to me the flagstaffs,
beautifully decorated, of the Pāṇḍavas
and of our soldiers."

2 I will tell you all (replied Sañjaya)
about the flagstaffs
and flags of those mahātmā warriors –
their names, shapes, colours.

3 O Indra-among-rājās, on the chariots
of those excellent heroes
could be seen all kinds of flags
blazing like fires.

4 Made of gold, or gold-inlaid,
or decorated with gold-garlands,
looking like the mahā-peak
of golden Sumeru itself,

5 The flags of these heroes
were multi-coloured, very beautiful.
The flagstaffs glittered
with numerous fluttering pennants.

6 They looked exquisite, all of them,
with colourful streamers
tied to them – streamers that swayed
in every gust of wind,

7 Like lovely girls dancing in the centre
of pleasure grounds.
O bull-brave Bharata,
like rainbows were those pennants

8 Of the mahā-chariot-heroes,
fluttering and beautifying the vehicles.
The flag, with its emblem
of a fierce-faced, lion-tailed ape,

9 Belonging to Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
terrorised his foes.
O rājā, that magnificent ape,
embellished with pennants,

10 The emblem on the flagstaff
of the Gāṇḍīva-wielder
terrorised your soldiers.
O Bharata, Droṇa's son's lion-tail

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11 Emblem fluttered effulgent
like the newly-risen sun.
Made of gold, fluttering gracefully,
like Śakra-Indra's flag,

12 Was the emblem of Droṇa's son
flapping high, inspiring the Kauravas.
Karṇa's symbol
was a golden elephant-rope.

13 Mahārāja, it seemed to ignite
the entire sky.
Its pennants, gold-flower garlanded
and gold-inlaid,

14 Swayed in the wind, as if dancing.
The Pāṇḍavas' ācārya,
the Brahmin devoted to performance
of strict tapasyā,

15 Gotama's son Kṛpa,
had as emblem a bovine bull.
O rājā, that *go-vṛṣa* emblem
on his mahā-chariot

16 Blazed like Śiva,
destroyer of the triple-fort Tripura.
Vṛṣasena's symbol was a golden
gem-and-jewel-inland peacock.

17 It fluttered in the army's rear,
as if ready to shrill its cry.
That peacock made the mahātmā
hero's chariot as radiant

18 As the peacock-emblemed chariot of Skanda.
O Indra-among-rājās,
like a shooting flame,
Madra-rājā Śalya's emblem

19 On his flag, O honour-bestowing monarch,
was a beautiful ploughshare.
That ploughshare atop his chariot
resembled a Śitā-pratimā,

20 A seed-filled furrow,
an image of the goddess of fertility
glowing after harvest.
A silver boar, the Sindhu-rājā's emblem,

21 Decorated with gold garlands,
shone like white crystal.
With that flag-emblem,
Jayadratha looked as resplendent

22 As Pūṣan in the past,
in the war between gods and anti-gods.
Ritualistic Bhūriśravas'
yajña-stake emblem

23 Shone like the sun and the moon
shining together,
like the massive stake
in the supreme Rājasūya-yajña.

24 Mahārāja, Śalya's emblem
was a huge silver elephant,
decorated on all sides
with golden peacocks.

25 O bull-brave Bharata!
That silver emblem
added to the glory
of your assembled warriors.

26 Like the huge white elephant
of the chief god Devarāja-Indra
adorning his army, Duryodhana's emblem
was a gem-inlaid elephant.

27 O lord of the world! O rājā!
What a splendid sight!
Your son looked magnificent
with that massive flagstaff
on his radiant incomparable chariot
tinkling with hundreds of *kiṅkiṇī*-bells –

28 As he stood among your soldiers –
the foremost bull-brave Kaurava.
These nine splendid flagstaffs fluttered
above the armies

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29 Like the doomsday suns
at the end of a yuga.
The tenth flag, of a huge ape,
was Arjuna's.

30 With that flag Arjuna looked
like a mountain on fire.
Then the foe-afflicting
mahā-chariot-heroes lifted

31 Massive, shining, wonderful bows
to attack Arjuna.
Arjuna, foe-crusher,
also readied his magnificent,

32 Divinely crafted Gāṇḍīva-bow,
thanks to the fruits
of your ill policies;
thanks to which so many kings, O rājā,

33 Perished, from so many lands,
with their horses,
elephants and chariots.
Shouting, they attacked each other,

34 Led by Duryodhana on one side,
and the finest Pāṇḍava on the other,
Arjuna, with Krishna as charioteer,
dazzled all,

35 For he, single-handed as it were,
faced heavy odds against him.
Nocking his Gāṇḍīva,
he looked glorious, mahā-muscled,

36 A veritable tiger-among-men,
eager to vanquish his foes
and kill Jayadratha,
the Sindhu ruler.

37 Foe-persecuting tiger-among-men Arjuna
let loose
thousands of arrows,
making your soldiers invisible!
The mahā-chariot-heroes also
shrouded Pārtha-Arjuna

38 With a deluge of arrows
from all sides.
When tiger-among-men Arjuna
was surrounded thus
by those bull-brave Kauravas,
the din was deafening.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SIX

1 "Tell me, Sañjaya," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"what the Pāñcālas did,
attacked by Droṇa, and with Jayadratha
within Arjuna's reach."

2 Mahārāja, that afternoon (replied Sañjaya)
a horripilating clash,
with Drona as stake, locked the Pāñcālas
and the Kauravas.

3 Exulting in the hope of killing Drona,
the Pāñcālas, O gracious monarch,
shouting fiercely,
let loose a torrential volley of arrows.

4 It was dreadful, tumultuous, marvellous –
the Kaurava-Pāñcāla clash,
like that between gods and anti-gods
in the distant past.

5 The Pāñcālas, along with the Pāṇḍavas,
targeted Droṇa's chariot
with many mahā-weapons,
hoping to pierce his ranks.

6 Driving at medium speed,
the earth shaking under them,
chariot-heroes attacked Droṇa's chariot
with a deluge of arrows.

7 Mahā-chariot-hero Bṛhatkṣatra
of the Kekayas
attacked Droṇa with sharp arrows
resembling Mahendra-Indra's thunderbolt.

8 Famed Kṣemadhūrti of the Kauravas retaliated,
attacking him
with hundreds and thousands
of sharp arrows.

9 Hugely powerful Dhṛṣṭaketu of the Cedis
used his strength
against Kṣemadhūrti
like Mahendra-Indra against Śambara.

10 Seeing Dhṛṣṭaketu rushing furiously,
like Death itself, mouth agape,
the mahā-archer Vīradhanvā
tried to stop him.

11 Brave Droṇa blocked mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira
and his soldiers
as they made efforts
to secure a victory.

12 *Prabhu*-lord, your illustrious son Vikarṇa
challenged Nakula,
equally illustrious and skilled
in the arts of war.

13 Foe-routing Durmukha,
with thousands of swift arrows,
pinned down Sahadeva
who was advancing against him.

14 Vyāghradatta blocked the advance
of tiger-among-men Sātyaki,
making him tremble
under a shower of sharp arrows.

15 Somadatta's son Śala blocked
the tigers-among-men
sons of Draupadī, who were angrily
shooting well-aimed shafts.

16 Alambusa, the mahā-chariot-hero son
of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga,
wrathful and fearful-looking,
blocked the advance of Bhīma.

17 Between man-Bhīma and rākṣasa-Alambuṣa
a clash ensued, O king,
resembling the Rāma-Rāvaṇa clash
in the distant past.

18 Then, O Bharata,
best-of-the-Bharatas Yudhiṣṭhira,
with ninety depressed-knot arrows,
wounded the vital limbs of Droṇa.

19 O excelling Bharata!
Angered by the illustrious son of Kuntī,
Droṇa shot twenty-five arrows
at Kaunteya-Yudhiṣṭhira's chest.

20 Again, with another twenty arrows,
in front of all the bowmen,
Droṇa wounded him,
his charioteer and horses.

21 Pāṇḍu's son, Dharmātmā Yudhiṣṭhira,
with great dexterity,
neutralised the arrow-deluge
discharged by Droṇa.

22 The excellent archer Droṇa, infuriated,
sliced the bow
of mahātmā Yudhiṣṭhira
in that duel with Dharmarāja.

23 After splintering Yudhiṣṭhira's bow,
the mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa
shrouded him with a deluge
of a thousand arrows.

24 Unable to see the rājā through the screen
of Droṇa's arrows,
all present on the battlefield
presumed he was killed.

25 O Indra-among-rājās!
Some thought he had fled.
Others thought:
*The mahātmā Brahmin has killed the rājā.*

26 A perilous position it was
for Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.
Throwing away his bow
splintered by Bharadvāja's son;

27 He picked up another,
divinely crafted, very strong.
The arrows shot by Droṇa
in thousands upon thousands –

28 He neutralised them all, O rājā.
Wonderful!
After frustrating that arrow-shower,
his eyes red with rage,

29 He picked up a *śakti*-spear –
gold-staved, mahā-fearful,
terror-instilling, eight-bells-tinkling,
mountain-piercing.

30 Brandishing that spear,
the rage-filled powerful hero
screamed his war-cry,
striking terror in all creatures.

31 Seeing the *śakti*
brandished by Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
everyone shouted, "*Svasti Droṇāya!*
May Drona fare well!"

32 That *śakti*, hurled by the strength
of the rājā's arms,
looked like a sloughed-off serpent;
dazzling the sky-quarters

33 It sped towards Droṇa's ranks
like a fire-spitting Pannagī she-snake.
O lord of the world,
seeing that spear shooting towards him,

34 All-weapons-expert Droṇa
readied the Brāhma-missile.
Reducing to ashes the fearsome *śakti*,
that missile

35 Swung in the direction
of Yudhiṣṭhira's chariot.
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira neutralised it
with his own Brāhma-weapon,

36 For he knew the art of baffling
such an attack.
O gracious monarch! Wounding Droṇa
with five razor-sharp, depressed-knot

37 Arrows, he sliced the great bow
of his enemy.
Throwing aside the splintered bow,
Kṣatriya-crushing Droṇa

38 Hurled a mace at Yudhiṣṭhira,
the son of Dharma.
Seeing the mace about to hit him,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira

39 Aimed another mace and hurled it,
O foe-tormentor.
The two maces, flung with force,
collided in mid-air;

40 Sparks crackled;
and the maces thudded on the ground.
O gracious monarch! Infuriated
with the action of Dharmarāja, Droṇa

41 Killed his horses
with four sharp pointed arrows.
With a *bhalla*-shaft, he sliced
Yudhiṣṭhira's rainbow-like bow.

42 He sliced his flagpole with one
and wounded Pāṇḍu's son with three.
Jumping down from his horse-less chariot,
Yudhiṣṭhira

43 Stood weaponless on the field,
arms upraised.
Seeing the rājā chariot-less and weapon-less,
O bull-brave Bharata,

44 Firm-vowed Droṇa dexterously held back
the enemy soldiers,
shooting innumerable sharp,
accurate arrows.

45 Like a ferocious lion attacking a deer,
he turned on Yudhiṣṭhira.
Seeing the rājā
threatened by slayer-of-enemies Droṇa,

46 O gracious monarch,
the Pāṇḍavas screamed: "*Hato* rājā! *Hato* rājā!
The rājā is dead! The rājā is dead!
Killed by Bhāradvāja Droṇa!"

47 O Bharata, such were the mahā-wails
of the Pāṇḍava soldiers.
Quickly climbing into the chariot
of Sahadeva,

Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
fled from the field,
speeding away from battle
on swift-galloping steeds.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SEVEN

Sañjaya continued:

1 Mahārāja, with many arrows
Kṣemadhūrti wounded brave Bṛhatkṣatra
in the chest, while the valiant Kekaya prince
was advancing.

2 Then, O rājā, rājā Bṛhatkṣatra,
to break Droṇa's ranks,
wounded Kṣemadhūrti
with ninety depressed-knot arrows.

3 Infuriated Kṣemadhūrti sliced the bow
of the mahātmā Kekaya ruler
with a finely-tempered,
keenly-sharpened arrow.

4 After slicing the bow,
he wounded
the wielder of the bow as well
with depressed-knot arrows.

5 Smiling, Bṛhatkṣatra used another bow
to render useless
mahā-chariot-hero Kṣemadhūrti's horses,
charioteer and chariot.

6 Then, with a finely whetted and sharpened
*bhalla*-arrow,
he severed from the body
that king's glittering ear-ringed head.

7 Immaculately sliced, that curly-haired
and lovely-diademed head,
swung like a meteor in the sky,
and dropped on the earth.

8 Delighted by slaughtering his enemy,
the mahā-chariot-hero Bṛhatkṣatra,
for the good of Pārtha-Yudhiṣṭhira,
attacked your troops.

9 O Bharata, the fierce archer Vīradhanvā,
of great prowess,
blocked Dhṛṣṭaketu who was advancing
against Droṇa.

10 Those two energetic heroes,
fanged with arrows,
exchanged volleys of thousands of thousands
of arrows.

11 They fought like two rutting elephants
locked in combat
in a huge, dense forest –
these two tiger-like warriors.

12 Bent on killing each other,
they pounced on each other
like two fierce tigers grappling
in a mountain cave.

13 O lord of the world, what a spectacle –
that horrendous duel!
Thousands of Siddhas and Cāraṇas watched it,
wide-eyed.

14 Then, O Bharata, infuriated Vīradhanvā,
smiling none the less,
sliced Dhṛṣṭaketu's bow in two
with a *bhalla*-arrow.

15 The mahā-charioter-hero rājā of Cedi
flung aside his halved bow,
and lifted
a gold-handled *śakti*-spear.

16 O Bharata, carefully balancing
that dynamic *śakti*
with both hands,
he hurled it at Vīradhanvā's chariot.

17 His chest shredded
by that warrior-wounding *śakti*,
Vīradhanvā toppled from his chariot
to the ground.

18 O radiant one! With the mahā-chariot-hero
of Trigarta killed,
the Pāṇḍavas created total panic
in your army.

19 Durmukha shot sixty arrows
at Sahadeva,
challenging Pāṇḍu's son
with fierce war-cries.

20 Mādrī's son Sahadeva, infuriated,
smiled, and wounded advancing Durmukha
with sharp arrows –
cousin-brother fighting cousin-brother!

21 Then, O Bharata,
seeing mahā-powerful Sahadeva retaliate,
Durmukha succeeded in wounding him
with nine arrows.

22 Shattering with a *bhalla*-shaft
the flagstaff of Durmukha,
mahā-powerful Sahadeva killed his horses
with four sharp arrows.

23 With another finely polished
and keenly-sharpened shaft
he severed the shining ear-ringed head
of Durmukha's charioteer.

24 Then, cleaving the magnificent bow
of the Kaurava
with a razor-sharp arrow,
Sahadeva pierced him with five more.

25 Woebegone Durmukha abandoned his chariot,
whose steeds were killed,
and climbed into the chariot
of Niramitra, O rājā.

26 Slayer-of-hostile-heroes Sahadeva,
in a fit of fury,
killed Niramitra with a *bhalla*-shaft
on the mahā-battlefield.

27 The son of the Trigarta ruler,
Niramitra toppled
from the chariot-seat,
and despair gripped your army.

28 After killing him, mahā-muscled Sahadeva
shone on the field
like Daśaratha's son Rāma
after killing mahā-powerful Khara.

29 Lord of men! Seeing their king's son,
the mahā-chariot-hero Niramitra,
killed,
the Trigarta ranks wailed, "Hai! Hai!"

30 Then, O rājā, in no time at all,
Nakula routed
your large-eyed son Vikarṇa –
an unbelievable feat!

31 In the centre of the armies,
with depressed-knot arrows,
Vyāghradatta shrouded Sātyaki,
his horses, chariot and charioteer.

32 Śini's son, skilled in-warfare Sātyaki
neutralised those arrows,
and with fresh shafts destroyed Vyāghradatta:
horses, charioteer, and flagpole.

33 *Prabhu*-lord, with the death of the son
of the Magadha ruler,
the Magadha soldiers concentrated
on attacking Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki.

34 Discharging arrows and *tomara*-lances
in thousands,
along with *bhindipālas*, spears, mallets
and giant clubs,

35 The heroes battled
with the invincible Sātvata hero.
But incredibly powerful Sātyaki,
with no effort,

36 A bull-among-men, smiling gently,
routed the Magadhas.
Those that survived,
fled the field helter-skelter.

37 O radiant one! Your soldiers, already harassed
by Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki's arrows,
panicked and ran. Sātyaki continued
decimating your ranks;

38 He looked magnificent, with his bow pulled taut.
Routed by the mahātmā Sātvata hero, your soldiers

39 Refused to fight further,
so frightened were they
of the long-armed hero.
Infuriated Droṇa rolled his eyes
and advanced upon
the impossible to-defeat hero Sātyaki.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED EIGHT

1 Mahā-renowned Śala, Somadatta's son
(continued Sañjaya),
wounded Draupadī's five sons with five,
and then with seven, shafts.

2 O radiant one! So oppressed were Draupadī's sons
by that fierce warrior
that in their bewilderment
they did not know what to do.

3 But the foe-decimating son of Nakula,
Śatānīka succeeded in wounding Śala;
and elated,
he roared his war-cry.

4 The other brothers, Draupadī's sons,
with concerted effort,
wounded Somadatta's angry son,
each with ten straight arrows.

5 Mahārāja, Somadatta's son Śala
retaliated with five shafts,
each accurately striking a brother
in the chest.

6 Though injured by the arrows
of the mahātmā warrior,
the five brothers surrounded
and wounded him grievously.

7 Arjuna's son Srutikīrti, incensed,
despatched his four horses
to the realm of Yama
with four specially sharp arrows.

8 Bhīma's son Sutasoma disintegrated
the bow of Somadatta's renowned son;
roaring,
he wounded Śala with sharp arrows.

9 Yudhiṣṭhira's son Prativindhya
sliced Śala's flagstaff
and toppled it,
and Nakula's son killed his charioteer.

10 Seeing his brothers incapacitate
Somadatta's son Śala,
Sahadeva's son beheaded Śala
with a razor-sharp arrow.

11 Gold-adorned,
dazzling like the radiant rising sun,
the head toppled on the field,
beautifying it.

12 Seeing Somadatta's mahātmā son
slaughtered thus,
his head rolling, your frightened army
fled helter-skelter.

13 But incensed Alambuṣa fought on
with mahā-powerful Bhīma,
like Rāvaṇa's son Meghanāda
with Lakṣmaṇa.

14 Seeing the human and the rākṣasa
locked in combat,
all creatures stood and watched
in wonder and delight.

15 O rājā, with nine depressed-knot shafts,
Bhīma smilingly
wounded that Indra-among-rākṣasas,
Ṛṣyaśṛṅga's son.

16 Screaming horrendously, the rākṣasa,
with a host of followers,
pounced on Bhīma
on the battlefield.

17 Wounding Bhīma
with five depressed-knot arrows,
he swiftly killed thirty chariot-hero supporters
of Bhīma.

18 Slaying another four hundred warriors,
he wounded Bhīma with winged arrows.
Grievously hurt,
mahā-powerful Bhīma,

19 Almost swooning, slumped asquat
in his chariot;
but, regaining consciousness, infuriated,
the wind-god's son, Māruti-Bhīma,

20 Pulled taut his magnificent,
fearful bow,
and pierced all of Alambuṣa's body
with sharp arrows.

21 Shaft-riddled, that rākṣasa who looked
like a huge heap of collyrium,
glowed, O rājā,
like a flowering *kiṁśuka*-tree.

22 Pierced in battle with arrows
from the bow of Bhīma,
recalling how mahātmā Bhīma
had earlier butchered his brother,

23 The rākṣasa transformed himself hideously
and said to Bhīma,
"Stop, Pṛthā's son!
Witness today my special prowess!

24 Wicked one! You killed my brother,
bravest-of-rākṣasas Baka.
You butchered him –
but not in front of my eyes."

25 Having said this,
he immediately made himself invisible,
and shrouded Bhīma
with a massive downpour of arrows.

26 As soon as the rākṣasa became invisible
in front of him,
Bhīma filled the entire sky
with depressed-knot arrows.

27 Foiled by Bhīma's ploy,
the rākṣasa slipped inside his chariot.
He kept swooping skywards
and burrowing in the earth,

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28 Changing countless forms at will,
big and small.
Gross, subtle, massive,
he roared like storm-clouds.

29 Whirling everywhere,
he babbled in many tongues.
Suddenly, out of the sky
dropped thousands of arrows,

30 *Śakti*-spears, *kaṇapās*, lances,
pikes, axes,
fire-pipes, spiked maces, *bhindipālas*,
and short javelins,

31 As well as rocks, scimitars, steel balls
and thunderbolts.
That torrent of weapons
unleashed by the rākṣasa

32 Decimated the soldiers of Pāṇḍu's son.
That weapons-deluge
slaughtened many elephants
in the ranks of the Pāṇḍavas,

33 And many horses and foot-soldiers as well,
O rājā.
Killed by the rākṣasa's arrows,
chariot-heroes stumped in their seats.

34 Blood the waters
Chariots the eddies
Elephants the whirlpools
Chariot-umbrellas the *haṁsa*-swans
Flesh-and-marrow the slush
Chopped arms the snakes –

35 O rājā! A river flowed on the battlefield,
surrounded by rākṣasas,
sweeping in its currents the Cedis,
Pāñcālas and Sṛñjayas.

36 O rājā, seeing the rākṣasa
fearlessly dominating the field
with devastating prowess,
the Pāṇḍavas were near despair.

37 Meanwhile the soldiers of your army
exulted freely –
they blew horripilating sounds
on musical instruments.

38 Like an elephant unable to tolerate
a hand-clap,
Bhima could not bear the noise
of the celebration.

39 Eyes copper-red in anger,
blazing like foe-consuming fire,
Bhīma invoked the Tvaṣṭṛ-weapon,
as if he was Tvaṣṭā himself.

40 Suddenly, a thousand arrows materialised
as if from nowhere.
These arrows wrought a mahā-slaughter
of your warriors.

41 That special weapon invoked by Bhīma
on the battlefield
dissipated the rākṣasa's mahā-māyā
and wounded him.

42 His entire body pierced
by Bhīma's special weapon,
the rākṣasa left his foe,
and fled towards Droṇa.

43 O rājā, seeing the Indra-among-rākṣasas
routed by mahātmā Bhīma,
the Pāṇḍavas
deafened the quarters with shouts.

44 Joyously they praised the feat
of Maruta's mahā-powerful son,
even as the Marutas once praised
Śakra-Indra's rout of Prahlāda.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED NINE

1 Alambuṣa paraded fearlessly (said Sañjaya)
in another part of the field,
but Hiḍimbā's son wounded him
with sharp arrows.

2 Like the battle between Śakra-Indra
and Śambara,
this battle between the two fierce rākṣasas
employed varied māyā.

3 In a raging burst of wrath,
Alambuṣa pounced on Ghaṭotkaca.
The battle between those two
finest and foremost rākṣasas

4 Resembled, *prabhu*-lord, the ancient battle
between Rāma and Rāvaṇa.
Piercing Alambuṣa's chest
with twenty *nārāca*-arrows,

5 Ghaṭotkaca repeatedly screamed leonine war-cries.
O rājā, wounding Hiḍimbā's son repeatedly,
Alambuṣa

6 Exulted, and filled the sky
with his roars.
The two Indras-among-rākṣasas,
mahā-powerful and infuriated,

7 Confounded each other
with a hundred tricks of māyā.
Using māyā-magic,
each briefly ontwitted the other.

8 Skilled in the artifices of māyā-magic,
both fought on.
O rājā, whatever māyā-ruse was employed
by Ghaṭotkaca

9 Was instantly neutralised by the anti-māyā
of Alambuṣa.
Seeing the various tactics
concocted by māyā-proficient

10 Alambuṣa, that Indra-among-rākṣasas,
the Pāṇḍavas were enraged.
Anxious, agitated,
all their chariot-heroes,

11 Including Bhīma, converged in attack
on Alambuṣa.
O king, encircling Alambuṣa
with their chariots,

12 They arrow-drowned him, like hunters
trapping an elephant with fiery torches.
Neutralising their weapons
with his māyā-weapons,

13 Alambuṣa slipped out of the chariot-ring
like an elephant
out of a forest-fire.
Stretching his Indra-thunder-twanging bow,

14 He wounded Maruta's son Bhīma
with twenty-five arrows,
Bhīma's son with five, Yudhiṣṭhira with three,
Sahadeva with five.

15 He assailed Nakula with seventy-three,
and each son of Draupadī with five.
Then he roared
a fearful war-cry.

16 Bhīma wounded the rākṣasa with nine,
Sahadeva wounded him with five,
and Yudhiṣṭhira
with a hundred arrows.

17 Nakula wounded him with four,
each son of Draupadī with three,
Hiḍimbā's son
with five hundred arrows,

18 And again with another seventy,
screaming loudly when he finished.
The scream
made the earth quake,

**19** With her mountains,
forests and expanses of water.
Wounded by those mahā-chariot heroes,
Alambuṣa, O rājā,

**20** Retaliated by piercing them
with five arrows each.
Seeing the rākṣasa Alambuṣa
raging on the field,

**21** Ghaṭotkaca, infuriated,
wounded him with seven arrows.
Indra-among-rākṣasas Alambuṣa,
wounded by his mahā-powerful foe,

**22** Swiftly released a shower of gold-winged,
stone-sharpened arrows.
These depressed-knot shafts pierced
the body of Ghaṭotkaca

**23** Like huge angry snakes slithering
inside a mountain slope.
Then, O rājā, with sharp arrows
the Pāṇḍavas,

**24** With Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca,
attacked Alambuṣa.
Grievously wounded
by the victory-seeking Pāṇḍavas,

**25** Alambuṣa, victim of mortality-dharma,
became confused over his duty.
The mahā-powerful rākṣasa
son of Bhīma,

**26** Noticing his bewilderment,
determined to kill him.
He rushed at the chariot
of the Indra-among-rākṣasas,

**27** A chariot that dazzled
like a hill-top in flames,
a chariot like a fractured hill of collyrium.
Anger roused,
Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca leapt
from his chariot into Alambuṣa's.

28 He dragged Alambuṣa from his chariot
like Garuda
pulling out a snake.
Pummelling him, he whirled him

29 And dashed him on the ground,
like a man
flinging a clay water pot
on a rock.
Agile and hugely powerful,
gifted with prowess,

30 Livid with anger,
Bhīma's son terrorised your army.
His limbs crushed, his bones mangled,
looking horrendous,

31 Butchered by brave Ghaṭotkaca,
rākṣasa Alambuṣa
looked like a sāla-tree
storm shattered and uprooted.
With the night-prowler dead,
the delighted Pāṇḍavas

32 Broke into loud victory-cries,
waving high
and flapping their uniforms.
Seeing the Indra-among rākṣasas dead,

33 Powerful Alambuṣa himself,
lying like a shattered hill,
O bull-brave Bharata,
your warriors wailed "Hai! Hai!"

34 And they all came, curious crowds,
to see the rākṣasa
lifeless on the field
like a burnt-out log of charcoal.

35 Like Vāsava-Indra slaying Bala,
the finest rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca
slew Alambuṣa,
and screamed fiercely.

36 Ghaṭotkaca approached rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
son of Dharma,
with bowed head narrated his feat,
offered *añjali* and waited.

37 O rājā, the eldest Pāṇḍava
affectionately smelt his head
and, embracing him, said, eyes aglow,
"I am pleased with you."

38 All were delighted when Ghaṭotkaca
pummelled to death
the mighty rākṣasa Alambuṣa,
son of Śālakaṭaṅka.

39 For this feat Ghaṭotkaca was praised
by elders and relatives.
Crushing Alambuṣa like an *alambuṣa*-fruit,
he was overjoyed.

40 Then, all on a sudden
arose among the Pāṇḍavas
a cacophonous medley
of conches blaring
and various weapons
whirling and whizzing.
Hearing that clamour,
the Kauravas responded
with similar war-cries
till the whole earth resounded
with the din of their shouts
and reverberating echoes.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED TEN

1 "Sañjaya, tell me," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"about the tactics
used by Yuyudhana-Sātyaki to check Droṇa.
I am very curious."

2 O mahā-wise rājā (continued Sañjaya),
a horrilipating clash took place
between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas
who were led by Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki.

3 O gracious monarch, seeing his soldiers harassed
by Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
Droṇa decided to attack
supremely accomplished Sātyaki.

4 With a volley of twentyfive arrows
Sātyaki wounded Droṇa,
the mahā-chariot-hero son of Bharadvāja,
who was advancing swiftly upon him.

5 Droṇa, with a brilliant show of prowess,
wounded Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
with five keenly sharpened
gold-winged arrows.

6 O rājā! These flesh-eating arrows
penetrated Sātyaki's armour
and plunged inside the earth
like hissing Pannaga-serpents.

7 Like a hook-goaded elephant,
long-armed Sātyaki,
livid with anger, pierced Droṇa
with fifty fiery *nārāca*-shafts.

8 Though wounded by Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
the son of Bharadvāja
counter-attacked victory-seeking Sātyaki
with numerous arrows.

9 Mahā-powerful-archer Droṇa,
furiously angry,
again harassed the Sātvata hero
with depressed-knot shafts.

10 O lord of the world! Repeatedly wounded
by Bharadvāja's son,
Sātyaki was in a quandary
on what he should do.

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11 O king, despair showed large
on Yuyudhāna Sātyakis face
as he saw Droṇa shooting volleys
of sharp arrows.

12 O lord of the world! Seeing Sātyaki's plight,
your sons
and your whole army rejoiced
and roared like lions.

13 O Bharata, hearing that cacophony
and witnessing
the Madhu-descendant's plight,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira ordered his soldiers:

14 "The incredibly brave Vṛṣṇi-hero Sātyaki
is facing extinction in battle
at the hands of Droṇa,
like the sun imperilled by Rāhu.

15 Advance speedily
to the site of the clash!"
To the Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Yudhiṣṭhira said:

16 "What are you waiting for,
son of Pṛṣata?
Attack Droṇa, now!
Can't you see the danger he poses?

17 Fierce bowmen Droṇa is playing
with Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
like a child toying with a bird
tied to his string.

18 I want all my soldiers
led by Bhima and others – and you –
to advance to the site
of Yuyudhāna-Satyaki's chariot.

19 I will follow
with the rest of my army.
Sātyaki is in the very jaws of death.
We must save him today."

20 With these words, O Bharata,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira and his army
advanced against Droṇa
to rescue Sātyaki.

21 *Bhadraṁ te*! May good fortune be yours!
With the Pāṇḍavas and Sṛñjaya
attacking lone Droṇa,
the din was deafening.

22 Facing that tiger-among-men
maha-chariot-hero Droṇa,
they deluged him with sharp
*kaṅka*-and-peacock-feathered arrows.

23 Droṇa smiled and welcomed those heroes,
like a host
welcoming his guests
with water and comfortable seats.

24 Like guests gratified by the hospitality
of a gracious host,
the heroes were gratified by the arrows
of that great bowman.

25 *Prabhu*-lord! It is difficult to look
at the thousand-rayed midday sun:
it was difficult to look
at the radiant son of Bharadvāja.

26 The incomparable weapons-expert Droṇa
harassed them all with his arrows,
like the sun's scorching rays
afflicting earth-objects.

27 Mahārāja, under that fierce onslaught,
the Pāṇḍavas and Sṛñjayas
became helpless,
like elephants stuck in a swamp.

28 Like the scorching rays of the sun
scattering on all sides,
the mahā-arrows of Droṇa were seen
scattering in all directions.

29 That encounter left twentyfive
of the finest mahā-chariot Pāñcāla heroes
dead,
all deservingly respected by Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

30 And the people there witnessed how,
one by one,
brave Droṇa killed
the finest Pāṇḍava and Pāñcāla heroes.

31 Mahārāja, kiling a hundred Kekayas,
mouth agape,
Droṇa stood on the field
like Aṅtaka the Death-Dealer.

32 O lord of men, mahā-muscled Droṇa
decimated hundreds and thousands
of Pāñcālas, Sṛñjayas,
Matsyas and Kekayas.

33 Mutilated by Droṇa's arrows,
they roared in anguish –
the trauma of forest-creatures
caught in a conflagration.

34 Then, O king, the gods, gandharvas
and *pitṛs* exclaimed:
"Look at the Pāñcāla and Pāṇḍava armies
fleeing the field!"

35 And so it was that when Droṇa
started slaughtering the Somakas,
none dared stop him,
none was able to touch him.

36 While that slaughter of valiant heroes
bloodied the field,
Pṛthā-Kuntī's son heard the blare
of the Pāñcajanya-conch.

37 That rājā-of-conches, the Pāñcajanya,
roared with Vāsudeva-Krishna's breath.
The heroes protecting Jayadratha
continued to fight.

38 The Dhārtarāṣṭran warriors roared
before Vijaya-Arjuna's chariot –
the din drowned the twang
of the Gāṇḍīva.

39 Almost swooning,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira murmured to himself:
*The rājā-conch's blare tells me*
*all is not well with Pārtha-Arjuna.*

40 *The Kauravas are roaring war-cries*
*of exultation.*
These thoughts made Ajātaśatru-Yudhiṣṭhira
deeply perturbed.

41 Ajātaśatru-Yudhiṣṭhira turned to speak
to the Sātvata.
His voice was choked with despair,
he nearly fainted;
but he had a clear idea
of what next to do;
so he addressed the Śini hero
bull-brave Sātyaki thus.

42 "Descendant of Śini,
Eternal Dharma lays down the duty
of friend to friend in need.
Now is the time.

43 O bull-brave Śini, Sātyaki,
I think there is none in my army
who desires our welfare
more than you do.

44 In my opinion, one who is disciplined
and also loving –
only such a one should be entrusted
with a major responsibility.

45 Keśava-Krishna always seeks
the good of the Pāṇḍavas;
and you, O Vṛṣṇi-descendant,
equal him in prowess.

46 I am entrusting you
with a major mission.
You must accept it.
You must do as I say.

47 O bull-among-men,
Arjuna is your cousin-brother,
your friend and guru.
He is in trouble. Help him.

48 You are true-vowed, brave,
remover of a friend's fears;
you are respected in the three worlds
as a truth-speaker.

49 Śini-descendant, whoever sacrifices his life
for his friends
is as meritorious as one who gifts
the earth itself to Brahmins.

50 We have heard of many rājās
who gifted the earth to Brahmins
and attained heaven
as a result.

51 O radiant dharmātmā hero,
with palms folded in *añjali,*
I ask you: Do something even greater
than gifting the earth.

52 Only one person, Krishna,
remover of a friend's fears,
will sacrifice his life for a friend.
You are the second.

53 Only a true hero reaches out
to help another hero
battling for fame.
An ordinary human does not do so.

54 O descendant of Madhu, that being so,
I do not see
how anyone can help Vijaya-Arjuna now
except you.

55 I remember a time when Pāṇḍava-Arjuna
praised your feats
repeatedly in detail.
I was delighted to listen.

56 He said, 'Sātyaki is dexterous;
all-weapons-expert;
alert, prudent, heroic;
never confused on the battlefield.

57 He is a mahātmā mahā-chariot-hero,
mahā-shouldered,
mahā-muscled, mahā-chested, mahā-jawed,
mahā-powerful, mahā-valiant.

58 Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki is my pupil,
my loved-and-loving *sakhā*-friend,
I love him, he loves me;
with his help, I can crush the Kauravas.

59 O Indra-among-rājās,
even if Keśava-Krishna dons armour
to help us; even if Balarāma, Aniruddha
and heroic Pradyumna,

60 Or Gada, Sāraṇa, Sāmba and the Vṛṣṇis
Decide, mahārāja, to come to our aid,

61 I will prefer to have tiger-among-men Sātyaki,
For there is none to equal his splendid prowess.'

62 *Tāta*! Dear one! Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's words
in the Dvaita forest
were said to me in an assembly of nobles.
You were not present.

63 O descendant of Vṛṣṇi,
do not disappoint the hopes
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna, I, and Bhīma
have in you.

64 On my return from a pilgrimage,
in Dvārakā
I noticed the profound bhakti
you have for Arjuna.

65 O descendant of Śini,
no one except you
has shown us such deep affection
in our predicament.

66 O descendant of Madhu,
noble-lineaged hero,
you have bhakti for your *sakhā*-friend
and ācārya.

67 O mahā-muscled archer devoted to truth,
act so that
your prowess is well demonstrated today.
It should be so.

68 Clad in armour by Droṇa himself,
Suyodhana-Duryodhana is attacking Arjuna.
Other Kaurava mahā-chariot-heroes
targeted him earlier.

69 Fierce war-cries are being screamed
against Vijaya-Arjuna.
O honoured Śini hero,
rush instantly to Arjuna.

70 My soldiers and Bhima's soldiers
are watchful:
if Duryodhana tries to pursue you,
we will block him.

71 Look, descendant of Śini,
all the Bharata soldiers
scatter and flee,
you can hear their loud wailing.

72 Like the ocean on a full-moon *parva*
churned by a tempest,
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's army is put in turmoil
by Savyasācī-Arjuna.

73 The dust raised by the rushing chariots,
heroes and foot-soldiers
is slowly obscuring
the entire army.

74 Look, foe-destroying Phālguna-Arjuna
is encircled
by lance and javelin-wielding Sauvīras
of the Sindhu army.

75 Without defeating these forces,
we cannot vanquish Jayadratha.
All these warriors will lay down their lives
for the Sindhu ruler.

76 Look at the invincible army
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra –
bristling with lances, arrows, flags,
heroes, elephants!

77 Listen to the din of their drums,
to the blare of their conches,
their war-cries,
the rattle of their chariot-wheels!

78 Listen to their elephant trumpeting,
to the screams of their soldiers,
the horsemen's shouts –
making the earth tremble!

79 Facing Arjuna is the Sindhu army,
behind him is Droṇa's army –
so mighty, O tiger-brave king,
they can rout even Devendra-Indra.

80 Floundering in this army-ocean,
Arjuna might lose his life.
If he dies in battle,
how can I live?

81 With you alive, why should I face
such a crisis?
Guḍākeśa-Arjuna is young, handsome,
dark-blue-skinned.

82 Weapons-dexterous,
knowing all war-techniques,
he penetrated the Bharata ranks at sunrise;
soon the sun will set.

83 O Vṛṣṇi-descendant,
I do not know if he is still alive.
The Kaurava army
is truly a fathomless mahā-ocean.

84 Alone he entered the Bharata army,
mahā-muscled Bibhatsu-Arjuna –
an army even the gods
cannot vanquish.

85 Today's battle makes no sense
to my mind.
There in the distance is Droṇa
harassing my soldiers.

86 O mahā-muscled hero, see for yourself
how Droṇa dominates the field!
With so much to do,
you know what needs doing first.

87 O honoured hero, do immediately
what needs serious attention.
Personally, I think helping Arjuna
is the mahā priority.

88 Arjuna must be rescued –
and rescued now!
I do not fear for Dāśārha-Krishna,
Lord Protector of the universe,

89 For that tiger-among-men
can rout even the three worlds
if ranged against him.
Of this I have no doubt.

90 He can certainly scatter
the less strong Dhārtarāṣṭrans.
But, O Vṛṣṇi-descendant,
it is Arjuna who is outnumbered.

91 He is in danger of losing his life.
This is my despair.
Therefore, go to him,
as men of your calibre should

92 For men like Arjuna,
when urged by men like me.
Of the Vṛṣṇi chariot heroes,
only two are considered *atirathas.*

93 One is powerful-armed Pradyumna,
the other you.
Like Nārāyaṇa-Krishna in weapons-skill,
like Saṁkarṣaṇa-Balarama in strength,

94 Like Dhanañjaya-Arjuna in heroism,
such is your calibre.
You excel Bhīma and Droṇa
in every war-tactic.

95 O tiger-among-men,
that is how the wise assess your worth.
The gods, anti-gods and gandharvas,
the Kinnaras
and mahā-*uragas* are all convinced
that you alone are able,
singlehanded, to rout them.
So the wise say.

96 Wherever there is an assembly
of talented people,
they always discuss the wide range
of your excellent guṇas.

97 O Madhu-descendant, what they say is:
*Nothing in this world is unachievable by Sātyaki.*

98 Therefore, mahā-powerful hero, do as I say:
Fulfil Pārtha-Arjuna's wishes, and mine, and of all
those here.

99 O mahā-muscled one, in this crisis
do not disappoint us.
Forget about your life, cast off fear –
and fight!

100 O Śini-descendant, the Dāśārhas
never cherish their lives over-much.
Avoidance of, wavering in,
fleeing from battle

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101 Are practised by cowards and scoundrels –
never by Dāśārhas.
On bull-brave Śini, dharmātmā Arjuna
is your guru,

102 And Vāsudeva-Krishna is your guru
and wise Arjuna's guru.
That is the reason
I am giving you this advice.

103 Do not ignore my words,
for I am your guru's guru.
Whatever I tell you, has the approval
of Vāsudeva-Krishna and Arjuna.

104 I am speaking the truth.
Listen to my command,
O hero of true prowess,
and rush to Arjuna.

105 Penetrate the ranks of the ill-minded sons
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
Great Sātvata hero,
face the mahā-chariot-heroes,
and show them what worthy feats
you are capable of."

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED ELEVEN

1 These words, agreeable, well-meant
(continued Sañjaya),
sweetly spoken, timely, vividly presented,
eminently reasonable,

2 Of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira were spoken
to excelling Śini-descendant Sātyaki
who, O foremost Bharata,
replied to Yudhiṣṭhira:

3 "O hero of undecaying glory!
I have heard
your sweet, timely, fame-giving words
spoken for Phālguna-Arjuna's sake.

4 O Indra-among-rājās,
you are my well-wisher;
it is right that you order me
as you would Pārtha-Arjuna.

5 I will lay down my life if necessary,
in this mahā-war,
for Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
I will do anything you command.

6 O Indra-among-men! Why weak Kauravas –
ordered by you,
I will fight even the three worlds
of gods, anti-gods and humans!

7 Rājā, I tell you this in all truth.
I will crush in battle today
the entire army
of Suyodhana-Duryodhana.

8 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna is safe and well.
Easily will I reach him,
kill Jayadratha,
and return with Arjuna.

9 O lord of men, I must however tell you
what Vāsudeva-Krishna
and the most learned Phālguna-Arjuna
advised me.

10 Again and again,
in the midst of our soldiers
and within Vāsudeva-Krishna's hearing,
Arjuna insisted:

11 'Madhu-descendant,
coolly, nobly and determinedly,
till I kill Jayadratha,
you must protect rājā Yudhiṣṭhira.

12 O mahā-muscled one!
Only when I am assured the rājā is safe
with you and mahā-chariot-hero Pradyumna,
can I go about killing Jayadratha.

13 You know how dangerous Droṇa is,
Mādhava-Śatyaki.
Always in your mind must be the vow
he made before all.

14 Bharadvāja's son Droṇa is bent
on capturing
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira –
and he is capable of doing so.

15 I will kill Jayadratha,
and return soon enough,
but you must protect
finest-of-men Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

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16 Madhu-Sātyaki, ensure that Droṇa
does not capture the Dharmarāja –
and leave the killing of Jayadratha
to me.

17 But if finest-of-men Yudhiṣṭhira falls
in Bhāradvāja-Droṇa's hands,
my grief will prevent me, O Mādhava-Sātyaki,
from killing the Sindhu ruler.

18 If the truth-speaking, all-men-excelling
Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira
is captured by Droṇa, a second forest-exile
lies in store for us.

19 If wrathful Droṇa captures Yudhiṣṭhira
on the battlefield,
my victory over Jayadratha
will be a hollow success.

20 So, mahā-muscled descendant of Madhu,
to please me,
to win victory and fame,
ensure the safety of the rājā.'

21 You can see, *prabhu*-lord, that Savyasācī-Arjuna
has placed you in my trust,
for he fears
what Droṇa might do.

22 O mahā-muscled *prabhu*-lord!
I see every day that,
apart from Rukmiṇī's son Pradyumna,
on one equals Droṇa.

23 I am also considered a match
for supremely wise Droṇa.
I cannot sully my fame,
or ignore my ācārya's words

24 And leave you here all by yourself,
O lord of the earth.
Invincible-armour-clad,
dexterous-in-war Droṇa

25 Plays with a prisoner
like a boy with a bird.
If *makara*-emblemed Kārṣṇi-Pradyumna
were here

26 With his bow, I would have left you
in his protection,
as safe as with Arjuna. Protect yourself.
I gone, you are vulnerable.

27 O rājā! I go to save Arjuna –
who will save you from Droṇa.
You should not have the least misgiving
about Arjuna.

28 Mahā-muscled Arjuna will never succumb,
whatever the threat.
The ranks arrayed against him –
Sauvīras, Saindhavas, Pauravas,

29 Northerners and southerners,
and other mahā-chariot-heroes,
and the excellent chariot-heroes under Karṇa,
O rājā –

30 All of them together are less
than one-sixteenth of enraged Arjuna.
The entire earth –
gods, anti-gods, humans,

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31 Rākṣasas, and Kinnaras, and mahā-reptiles –
all moving and unmoving creatures –
cannot defeat
Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Arjuna.

32 Mahārāja, know his, and rest assured
about Arjuna.
Where two brave Krishnas, puissant archers,
are present,

33 There can be no obstacel
to what they plan.
What divine weapons, what resources,
what war-expertise,

34 What gratitude, what noble gentleness
your brother Arjuna shows in battle!
If I leave this place,
and go to Arjuna,

35 Think, O rājā, of the weapons-skill
Droṇa will display
for his one aim is to capture you
on the field, O rājā,

36 And O Bharata, he is determined
to fulfil his vow.
Can you protect yourself?
Who will save you when I am gone?

37 Who can I depend on to save you
when I am gone?
Mahārāja, unless I find such a one
to protect you in this mahā-war,

38 I will not leave you, O Kuru-descendant.
This I promise!
Give this the most serious thought,
the wisest reasoning,

39 And then, O rājā, what is best for your welfare –
Tell me that, and I will do as you command."

40 "What you say, O mahā-muscled one, is true,"
replied Yudhiṣṭhira.
"Yet, O honour-bestowing Mādhava, I am worried
what might happen to white horsed Arjuna.

41 I will do whatever I can
to protect myself.
I order you to proceed
to where Dhanañjaya-Arjuna is.

42 I have considered very carefully
both alternatives:
my safety on the battlefield,
and rescuing Arjuna,
I prefer the protecting of Arjuna.
Think it over.

43 And get ready to proceed
where Dhanañjaya-Arjuna is.
Mahā-powerful Bhīma
will look after my safety.

44 *Tāta*! Dear one! Mahā-powerful kings,
the uterine brothers of Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
he, and Draupadī's sons
will protect me.

45 The five Kekaya brothers,
and the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca,
Virāṭa, Drupada,
and the mahā-chariot-hero Śikhaṇḍin,

46 Dhṛṣṭaketu, and powerful Kuntibhoja,
my maternal uncle,
Nakula, Sahadeva,
the Pāñcālas and the Sṛñjayas –

47 All these warriors, with the greatest care,
will make every effort
to protect me. Neither Droṇa and his troops
nor Kṛtavarman

48 Will be able to harass,
let alone defeat me.
Foe-tormentor Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
facing wrathful Droṇa,

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49 Will restrain him
like the shores restraining an ocean.
And wherever Drupada's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna
makes a stand,

50 Droṇa will never be able
to dislodge him.
To destroy Droṇa,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna took birth from the sacred fire,

51 Mail-clad, sword in hand,
brandishing bow and arrows,
dazzling with ornaments.
Therefore, Śini-descendant,
do not fear for my safety.
Go with an easy conscience.
Dhṛṣṭadyumna will hold back
wrathful Droṇa."

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWELVE

1 These words of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
(continued Sañjaya),
made the bull-brave descendant of Śini
fear the blame
Pārtha-Arjuna would place on him,
were he to leave the king;

2 But fearing also the accusation
of cowardice
if he did not leave, he thought:
*Better not to hear*
*that I was afraid to go to reinforce*
*Phālguna-Arjuna.*

3 Bull-among-men Sātyaki
carefully weighed the consequences,
and finally replied
to Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira

4 "Lord of the earth, *svasti te-astu!*
May all go well with you.
Since you are certain
that your safety is certain,
I'll obey your command
to reinforce Bībhatsu-Arjuna.

5 Rājā, I tell you this truly:
There is no one
in the three worlds
dearer to me than Arjuna.

6 O bestower of honour, *mānada*!
Ordered by you,
permitted by you, I will proceed
towards Arjuna.
There is nothing I will not do
for your sake.

7 Finest of men, the words of my guru
are special to me.
But your words to me
are even more special.

8 Your two Krishna-Arjuna cousin-brothers
will do what you dearly desire;
so also will I,
O bull-brave rājā.

9 O bull-brave *prabhu*-lord!
I place your command on my head!
I will penetrate this formidable army
to save Pārtha-Arjuna.

10 Anger-inspired, I will pierce Droṇa's ranks
like a fish through the ocean,
and reach
where rājā Jayadratha is,

11 Hiding behind his soldiers,
afraid of Pāṇḍava-Arjuna,
and protected by Aśvatthāman, Karṇa,
Kṛpa and others.

12 O lord of the world!
Between here and where
Arjuna is struggling to slay Jayadratha
is three *yojanns.*

13 O rājā! Though he is three *yojanas* away,
I will resolutely reach Arjuna,
and help him
to kill Jayadratha.

14 O rājā, who unless ordered by his guru
will fight an enemy?
Who, like myself, when thus ordered,
will refuse to fight?

15 I know the exact battle-site
where I have to go.
*Prabhu*-lord, though it teems with ploughshares,
spears, maces, śaktis,

16 Arrows, and other weapons,
I will churn
this vast ocean-army.
This thousand-strong elephant-army

17 Is known as the Kulamāñjanaka,
comprising the finest elephants,
driven by war-loving,
war-skilled Mlecchas.

18 Rājā, these elephants
whose temples stream rutting juice
like clouds pouring rain,
when goaded never retreat.

19 The only way to vanquish them
is to kill them.
Rājā, the thousands of chariot-heroes
whom you see

20 Are all sons of rājās,
and *rukmaratha* mahā-chariot-heroes.
They are weapons-experts,
in chariot and on elephant-back.

21 They are perfect bowmen,
they can fight with their fists too.
They are brilliant mace-wielders,
and brilliant wrestlers.

22 Proficient swordsmen, they are expert
with sabre and shield;
brave, war-skilled, fiercely competitive
among themselves.

23 Rājā, they hope on the field daily
to rout thousands.
Rājā, Karṇa has made them
Duḥśāsana's devoted followers.

24 Even Vāsudeva-Krishna rates them
as the finest chariot-heroes.
Under Karṇa's control,
they seek his good.

25 Rājā, ordered by Karṇa,
leaving white-horsed Arjuna,
tireless, unscathed, armour-clad, strong-bowed,
they have come here.

26 Ordered by Duryodhana,
they are waiting to fight against me.
For your good, routing them in battle,
O Kaurava-descendant,

27 I will proceed to where
Savyasācī-Arjuna is.
These other seven hundred elephants,
O rājā,

28 Whom you can see, all armour-clad,
driven by Kirātas,
were presented by the Kirāta-rājā
to Savyasācī-Arjuna,

29 Fully caparisoned and equipped
to serve you.
But, rājā, though meant in the past
to protect you,

30 They are now ranged against you –
see, Kāla's wheel, how it spins!
The invincible Kirātas
now control them.

31 The Kirātas, learned in elephant-lore,
were all fire-born.
Savyasācī-Arjuna defeated them all
in battle,

32 But now, on Duryodhana's command,
they wait for my attack.
Killing the Kirātas
with my arrows,

33 I will proceed to where Pāṇḍava Arjuna
is battling
to kill Jayadratha.
As for these Añjana-elephants,

34 With tough hides, expertly trained,
dripping secretions
from temples and mouths,
covered with golden armour –

35 These elephants are brilliant in battle,
like Airāvata.
They have come from the north,
driven by ruthless robbers

36 Clad in armour, strong-sinewed,
magnificent warriors,
some cow-born, some born in the wombs
of monkeys,

37 Some in human wombs, and some
in the wombs of other species.
There are contingents of warriors,
black like smoke,

38 Vicious Mlecchas, arrived here
from Himālayan fastnesses.
Duryodhana, depending on this motley crowd
of rājās,

39 Which includes Kṛpa,
Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas,
and Droṇa, Jayadratha and Karṇa,
mocks the Pāṇḍavas,

40 And thinks highly of himself
as blessed by Kāla.
But all of them,
targeted by my *nārāca*-arrows,

41 Will not escape alive,
even if they are mind-swift.
Honoured by Duryodhana
who depends on others,

42 They will perish today in the deluge
of my arrows.
Rājā, the warriors with golden flagstaffs
whom you see –

43 They are the irresistible Kāmbojas,
renowned everywhere
for their valour, varied war-skills,
specially bowcraft.

44 They wait in perfectly disciplined ranks,
determined to aid each other –
a full *akṣauhiṇī*
of wrathful Dhārtarāṣṭrans,

45 Supported by other Kaurava heroes,
eagerly waiting,
cautious, mahārāja,
but ready to pounce on me.

46 But I shall consume them all,
like fire consumes grass.
So, with all war-equipment
and every facility,

47 Mahārāja, let my war-chariot
be furnished.
Provide it with every fierce weapon
needed for the battle,

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48 Indeed five times more than is recommended
by military ācāryas,
for today I march
against the snake-venomous Kāmbojas.

49 I must also battle the Kirātas,
venomous warriors,
equipped with all war-weapons,
trained to slaughter,

50 Who thrive in rājā Duryodhana's favour
and seek his good.
I must also battle the Śakas,
who are Indra-powerful,

51 Fierce like fire,
and as uncontrollable as fire.
I must fight other warriors too,
as fierce as Kāla.

52 I must battle with brilliant heroes.
So let my chariot
be yoked to the best-pedigreed,
best-groomed and well-watered steeds."

53 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira (Sañjaya continued)
ordered full quivers,
other weapons and equipment loaded
in Sātyaki's chariot.

54 Four splendid steeds were yoked
to his chariot,
after being made to drink intoxicating,
juicy feed.

55 Their thirst slaked, they were walked,
bathed and fed, and garland-decorated.
Their bodies had earlier
been arrow-plucked.

56 Only the very best, gold-skinned,
well-trained, swift, cheerful,
docile steeds were yoked,
after all these procedures.

57 The yoking was performed as advised
by experts.
Atop the chariot was the golden-maned
lion-symbol.

58 The flagstaff sparkled with white pennants,
and was encrusted
with gold circlets,
pearls and corals.

59 Loaded with a hoard of weapons,
that chariot
also had a massive umbrella
with a golden staff.

60 Like Mātali who is both
Indra's charioteer and *sakhā*,
Dāruka was Sātyaki's younger brother
and his charioteer;
he informed Sātyaki that the chariot
was ready.

61 Sātyaki bathed and after performing
the auspicious rites
offered thousands of gold coins
to *snātaka* Brahmins.

62 Radiant with their blessings,
handsome *madhuparka*-deserving Sātyaki
drank the *kailātaka*-honey
as was required,

63 And shone with an unearthly charm,
his eyes red with intoxication;
gladly he touched
the bronze hero-disc,

64 And seemed to blaze forth
with redoubled energy,
like fire itself. Slinging his bow
on his shoulder,

65 Encased in mail, ornament-adorned,
he had Brahmins ritually bless him;
then girls honoured him
with rice, flowers, and perfumes.

66 With folded palms he did *añjali*
at Yudhiṣṭhira's feet.
Yudhiṣṭhira smelt his head affectionately.
He climbed into his chariot.

67 The cheerful, strong, fleet-footed horses
of Sindhu breed,
invincible in battle,
raced off with Sātyaki's chariot.

68 Similarly, Bhīma, offered pūjā-respect
by Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
paid his respects to Yudhiṣṭhira,
and galloped off with Sātyaki.

69 Seeing these two foe-subduers
about to pierce their ranks,
your soldiers, headed by Droṇa,
stood still and watchful.

70 Seeing mail-clad Bhīma
following close behind,
Sātyaki welcomed him
with these delightful words:

71 "Bhīma, go and protect rājā Yudhiṣṭhira.
That is your duty.
Mine is to pierce
my Kāla-doomed foes.

72 O foe-crusher! Now, and later as well,
you must protect the rājā.
You know well my valour,
and I know yours;

73 Therefore, if you wish me well,
turn back, Bhīma."
Bhīma replied, "Very well then.
Attack and win!

74 O finest of men,
I will profect rājā Yudhiṣṭhira."
The descendant of Madhu
replied to Bhīma:

75 "Go back, Pārtha-Bhīma, go back!
My victory is sure,
because you have agreed
to do as I say.

76 There are auspicious signs as well
that indicate I will win.
When vicious Jayadratha
is killed by mahātmā Arjuna,

77 I shall return and embrace
Dharmātmā Yudhiṣṭhira."
Saying this to Bhīma,
mahā-illustrious Sātyaki drove off.

78 He looked in the direction of your troops
like a tiger at a herd of deer.
Seeing him gazing fixedly,
your soldiers panicked.

79 As ordered by Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira, Sātyaki
Launched his attack, in order to reach Arjuna.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED THIRTEEN

1 Mahārāja (continued Sañjaya), when Sātyaki,
eager for battle, attacked,
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
with his warrior-division,

2 Followed him, hoping to reach the chariot
of Droṇa.
Invincible Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
son of the Pāñcāla rājā,

3 And king Vasudāna shouted
to the Pāṇḍava forces:
"Quick! Come right now!
Attack the enemy,

4 So that indomitable Sātyaki's progress
is covered.
Many mahā-chariot-heroes
are bent on defeating him."

5 Saying this,
the mahā-chariot-heroes
recklessly attacked,
shouting,
"We will wipe out all
who dare to face us."

6 Seeing Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki advancing,
your warriors prepared themselves,
blaring their conches
and twanging their bows.

7 A reverberating roaring noise sounded
near Sātyaki's chariot.
Arrow-struck, your son's troops scattered
from the field,

8 Fragmented, O mahārāja,
into hundreds of segments.
In that confusion, the Śini-descendant
mahā-chariot-hero

9 Cut down seven brilliant archer-heroes
leading our army.
Next, O Indra-among-rājās, various rulers
and many others

10 Were sent by him to Yama's abode
with fire-tongued shafts,
killing a hundred warriors
with one shaft
and sometimes a single warrior
with a hundred shafts.

11 Like Śiva hunting and slaughtering
countless beasts,
he slaughtered elephant-riders
and their elephants,
horse-riders and their horses,
chariots and charioteers.

12 Not one of your warriors
dared oppose Sātyaki
as he dexterously planned
his torrential deluge of arrows.

13 Mutilated by the long-armed hero,
they panicked;
they fled at the mere sight
of that confident hero.

14 O lord of men, he was one
but they thought him many,
so confounded were they by his energy.
Countless chariots
lay shattered on the field,
their war-turrets in ruins.

15 Wheels splintered
Flags ripped
Umbrellas in shreds
Golden helmets crushed
Flagstaffs sliced
*Anukarṣas* smashed. . .

16 Sandal-paste-smeared arms,
adorned with *aṅgadas,*
thighs like elephant-trunks
or plump sinuous snakes

17 Littered the field;
thighs and arms bloodied the earth.
Moon-lovely-faces,
lovely-ear-ringed heads of warriors

18 With large bull-eyes
made the earth look so lovely.
Mountain-huge bodies of elephants
sliced and toppled

19 Made the earth so lovely –
a hill-undulating landscape.
With golden harnesses and strings
and webs of pearls,

20 Slaughtered by the long-armed hero,
corpses of horses
glittered on the field – loathsome,
a fearful, lovely spectacle.

21 Slicing his way through various divisions
of your army,
the Sātvata hero Sātyaki
penetrated its defences.

22 Sātyaki's plan was to follow
the path
Arjuna had taken –
But Droṇa stood in his way.

23 Burning with anger,
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki, did not retreat,
like the ocean refusing to retreat
in front of an obstacle.

24 Blocking the mahā-chariot-hero
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
Droṇa wounded him
with five marrow-piercing arrows.

25 Rājā, Sātyaki retaliated
with seven stone-sharpened,
gold-winged, and *kaṅka*-plumed
and peacock feathered arrows.

26 Counter-attacking, Droṇa wounded him,
his steeds and charioteer
with six shafts.
This affront
was not tolerated
by the mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki.

27 Again, Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki replied,
screaming his war-cry,
wounding Droṇa with ten, then six,
then eight arrows.

28 He followed these with ten more
which wounded Droṇa,
one which injured his charioteer,
and four more his steeds.

29 O lord of men, with a single arrow
he sliced
the flagstaff of Droṇa's chariot.
Droṇa replied.
shrouding his steeds, charioteer.
chariot and flagstaff

30 With swift arrows
like thick swarms of locusts.
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki also, unperturbed,
with countless shafts

31 Shrouded Droṇa.
Droṇa said to Sātyaki:
"Your cowardly guru has run off,
leaving me here.

32 Descendant of Madhu, he fled,
doing *pradakṣiṇa* to me,
keeping me on his right.
You will die

33 At my hands today, unless you flee
like your ācārya."
Sātyaki replied: "Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
has commanded me,
so I follow in Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's path.
*Svasti te Brāhmaṇa*!

34 May you fare well, Brahmin!
I will not waste time.
The path of the ācārya
is the path of the disciple.

35 I will quickly follow wherever
my guru goes."
Saying this (continued Sañjaya),
the Śini-descendant
rushed ahead, slipping past
ācārya Droṇa,

36 And then, O rājā,
to his charioteer he said:
"Droṇa will try his very best
to stop me.

37 Proceed carefully, charioteer,
and listen to me.
In the distance is the splendid army
of the Avantis.

38 Beside them are the ranks
of the southern warriors,
and alongside is the army
of the Bāhlīkas.

39 Near them is the army
of resolute Karṇa.
Remember, charioteer,
separated from each other,

40 Yet dependent mutually,
they reinforce each other.
Drive your steeds confidently
through them.

41 Drive me at medium speed
to the spot
where the Bāhlīkas are stationed,
weapons upraised,

42 Where the southerners are,
led by the Sūta's son Karṇa,
where the ranks of elephants,
horses, chariots

43 And foot-soldiers from various territories
are stationed."
Saying this,
he eluded the Brahmin Droṇa,

44 And plunged straight into the huge
and fierce ranks of Karṇa.
Burning with anger,
shooting arrows,

45 Droṇa chased the never-retreating,
fortune-favoured Sātyaki.
Harassing Karṇa's huge army
with sharp arrows,

46 Sātyaki penetrated the ranks
of the Kauravas.
As he did so,
the soldiers fled in fear,

47 But Kṛtavarman, fiercely angry,
checked him.
Sātyaki saw him advancing,
and shot six arrows at him;

48 With four more arrows,
he killed his four steeds.
With sixteen depressed-knot arrows,
Sātyaki again

49 Pierced the chest of Kṛtavarman.
Grievously wounded
by so many arrows of exceeding sharpness
and ferocity,

50 Mahārāja, Kṛtavarman was outclassed
by the Sātvata hero.
So he fitted the fire-spitting,
straight-flying arrows
known as the Vatsadanta
to his bow,

51 And stretching the bow taut
up to his ears,
he wounded Sātyaki.
Ripping through armour and chest,

52 The wonderful arrow
fitted with lovely feathers
like a speeding bird,
drenched with the blood of Sātyaki,
slid
into the earth itself.

53 The finest of powerful warriors,
perfectly versed
in the use of all war-weapons,
sliced the bow of Sātyaki
and, livid with anger,
he wounded

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54 Sātyaki, that remarkably puissant hero,
in the chest
with ten sharp shafts.
His bow sliced, valiant Sātyaki

55 Severed Kṛtavarman's right arm
with a *śakti*-spear.
Picking up a stronger bow,
Sātyaki strung it

56 And swiftly fired a volley
of hundreds
of thousands of arrows,
obscuring Kṛtavarman
and his chariot
with that torrent of arrows.

57 Shrouding Kṛtavarman with arrows,
with a *bhalla*-shaft
Sātyaki decapitated the charioteer
Hṛdīka's son.

58 The headless trunk of Kṛtavarman's charioteer
toppled on the ground.
The driver-less chariot,
pulled furiously
by the frightened horses,
sped from the field.

59 Incensed, the Bhoja ruler Kṛtavarman
restrained his steeds,
and bravely readied his bow,
applauded by your warriors.

60 Quickly regaining his composure,
once again
he urged his steeds forward.
Unafraid himself,
he instilled fear in the hearts
of his enemies.

61 O Indra-among-rājās!
Sātyaki kept advancing,
while Kṛtavarman turned
and attacked Bhīma;
then, Sātyaki fought his way out
of the Bhoja army,

62 And attacked the huge army
of the Kāmbojas
where many mahā-chariot-heroes
opposed him.

63 O rājā, in spite of this opposition,
Sātyaki remained unperturbed.
Re-forming his scattered soldiers,
Droṇa,

64 Determined to vanquish Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
rushed at him.
Seeing Droṇa attacking Sātyaki
in this manner,
launching an offensive
from the rear,

65 The Kaurava warriors were counter-attacked
by the confident
and exulting Pāṇḍavas
trying to block Droṇa.

66 But when the Pāñcālas
led by powerful Bhīma
faced the supreme chariot-hero,
Hṛdīka's son Kṛtavarman,
their spirits fell,
they despaired.

67 Rājā, valiant Kṛtavarman,
with all his energy,
checked his depressed yet nonetheless
heroic enemies.

68 Kṛtavarman blocked their attack
with a shower of arrows.
The struggling Pāṇḍavas
were in a state
of bewilderment and shock,
losing the will to fight.

69 Nonetheless, in their great crisis,
harassed by the Bhoja ruler
and his army,
the Pāṇḍavas,
though dispirited, battled on
for success and fame.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FOURTEEN

1 "Our army," said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"excels in various ways:
it has crack troops;
it is supremely disciplined;
it is organised in formations
as recommended
by military manuals;
and it is huge and mighty.

2 We treat our soldiers well;
they are loyal;
they are countless, and experienced –
a magnificent host!

3 Not too old, not too young;
not too thin, not too fat; –
these muscular soldiers are sturdy,
active, disease-free.

4 Clad in impenetrable mail,
armed with every essential weapon,
they are trained in expert use
of all war-weapons.

5 They are expert in mounting
and alighting from vehicles,
in leaping and somersaulting,
advancing and retreating.

6 Only after passing extensive tests
in horse, elephant and chariot control
has their pay
been determined,

7 Not because of family connections,
personal favour or nepotism.
None is conscripted,
none is unpaid.

8 My soldiers are from good families,
āryan gentlemen,
healthy, obedient, intelligent, well-rewarded,
familiar with fame.

9 And they, in turn, *tāta*, dear one,
are protected by learned advisers
and others of noble deeds,
who are veritable Lokapālas.

10 And countless rulers of the earth,
eager to help us,
have volunteered their troops and followers
to reinforce our soldiers.

11 It's like an ocean –
My army –
Overflowing with rivers
Entering from all sides –
With chariots
And wing-less horses
That seem to fly
Like birds,

12 And countless elephants with ichor
streaming down their temples.
Who except fate can bring about
such an army's defeat?

13 Soldiers its waters,
Vehicles its waves,
Swords and maces
And darts and *śakti*-spears
And javelins its fishes,

14 Flag-waving and ornamented soldiers
Its lotuses,
Swift-rushing horses and elephants
Its fury-churning tempests,

15 Droṇa
Its underground cave of Pātāla,
Kṛtavarman
Its huge lake,
Jalasaṁdha its huge *grāha* sea-creature,
And Karṇa
Its pride-swollen, splendid moonrise.

16 Sañjaya, that Pāṇḍava-bull Arjuna
with just one chariot
pierced through my ocean-huge army,
with Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki following –

17 With ambidexterous Savyasācī-Arjuna
and the Sātvata chariot-hero
doing this,
I fear my army's doom, Sañjaya.

18 Seeing these two heroes speedily
slice through the rear
of my troops, and the Sindhu-rājā
within the Gāṇḍīva's range,

19 What did the Kauravas,
doomed to ruin by Kāla, do?
What happened
to my fearsomely fighting warriors?

20 Dear one, *tāta*, I fear the Kauravas
are already dead.
Their performance in battle
is not what it used to be.

21 Krishna and the Pāṇḍava Arjuna
have pierced our ranks, unscathed.
There is no hero, Sañjaya,
who can repel them.

22 We tested and appointed countless
mahā-chariot-heroes.
We paid them handsomely,
we spoke to them sweetly.

23 *Tāta,* not one among my warriors
has been unfairly treated.
Each, according to ability, gets paid
and receives rations.

24 Sañjaya, not one in my army
gets less than he deserves;
there is not one in my army
who does not get paid.

25 I, my sons and relatives
give them pūjā-respect;
we give presents, we honour them
with the best of seats.

26 Even these veteran warriors
face defeat
at the hands of ambidexterous Arjuna.
Such is fate!

27 Sañjaya, the protectors and the protected
on the battlefield
walk the same simple road –
the path of defeat.

28 Seeing Arjuna challenging
the ruler of the Sindhus,
tell me, what strategy
did my foolish son adopt?

29 Seeing Sātyaki slip fearlessly
through his ranks,
what strategy did Duryodhana devise
to stop him?

30 Seeing those two unexcelled chariot-heroes,
beyond the reach of all weapons,
pierce their ranks,
what did my soldiers do?

31 It seems to me that,
seeing Krishna of the Dāśārhas
and the bull-of-the-Śinis helping Arjuna,
my soldiers are demoralised.

32 Seeing the Sātvata hero and Arjuna
pierce my army,
and the Kauravas fleeing the field,
my sons are demoralised.

33 It seems to me that,
watching their chariot-heroes
routed and unable to resist their foes,
my sons are demoralised.

34 It seems to me that,
seeing chariot-turrets decimated
by Sātyaki and Arjuna, and soldiers slain,
my sons are demoralised.

35 Seeing their horses, chariots, elephants
and thousands of soldiers
fleeing helter-skelter, it seems to me
my sons are demoralised.

36 It seems to me that my sons
are demoralised
seeing their huge elephants toppled
by Arjuna's arrows.

37 It seems to me my sons are demoralised
because they see
riders unhorsed and warriors uncharioted
by Arjuna and Sātyaki.

38 Because Pṛthā's son and Madhu's descendant
have killed or routed large-bodied horses,
it seems to me
my sons are demoralised.

39 It seems to me that my sons
are demoralised
seeing their forces scatter,
and no hope of victory.

40 Seeing the two invincible heroes
slip through Droṇa's ranks so effortlessly
is why it seems to me
my sons are demoralised.

41 *Tāta*, dear one, I am stupefied
hearing Acyuta-Krishna,
Arjuna and the Satvata hero
have penetrated my ranks.

42 Tell me, Sañjaya,
when the chariot-hero of the Śinis
sliced through the Bhoja ranks,
what did the Kauravas do?

43 Tell me also, Sañjaya, what happened
on the battlefield
when Droṇa decided to confront
and crush the Pāṇḍavas.

44 Droṇa is an unparalleled warrior –
strong, weapons-expert, indomitable.
How did the Pāñcālas
succeed in wounding him?

45 Desiring Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's victory,
the Pāñcālas opposed Droṇa.
Mahā-chariot-hero Aśvatthāman opposed
the Pāñcālas.

46 O Sañjaya, skilled story-teller,
give me the details
of how Arjuna killed
the Sindhu rājā."

47 O bull-brave Bharata hero (Sañjaya said),
do not lament
like any ordinary innocent person.
Your misdeed created this calamity.

48 Many well-wishers, including wise Vidura,
advised you, saying,
"Do not forsake Pāṇḍu's sons."
Rājā, you did not listen.

49 Any person who rejects the advice
of well-wishers
will weep as you are weeping
when calamity strikes.

50 The Dāśārha-descendant Krishna advised
that you make peace.
But even mahā-renowned Krishna failed
to get your favour, O rājā.

51 Realising you are *nirguṇa*, ineffectual,
partial to your sons,
devious in dharma,
and jealous of Pāṇḍu's sons,

52 Discovering also your crooked plans
against them,
and listening to your incoherent words,
O excelling ruler,

53 The lord of all the worlds,
the knower of the truth
of everything in all the worlds,
Vasudeva's son Krishna decided
that mahā-war with the Kauravas
was the only option.

54 O bestower of honour!
This mahā-terrible destruction
is the result entirely
of your fault.
Do not shift the blame
to Duryodhana.

55 O Bharata, from start to middle to finish
you did not do
a single good deed.
You are the root of this defeat.

56 So steady yourself and face the truth of things.
Listen to my description
of the battle
resembling the god-antigod clash.

57 When Śini's grandson
of truly incomparable prowess
pierced your ranks, Bhīma's Pāṇḍava troops
swooped on your army.

58 Single-handed, the mahā-chariot-hero
Kṛtavarman faced the attack
of the enraged Pāṇḍavas
led by Bhīma.

59 Like a seashore facing the sweep
of sea waves,
Hṛdīka's son Kṛtavarman faced
the warriors.

60 We witnessed the wonderful valour
of Kṛtavarman.
All the Pāṇḍava forces failed
to overpower him.

61 Strong-armed Bhīma blew his conch-shell,
and wounded Kṛtavarman
with three swift arrows, to the delight
of the Pāṇḍava troops.

62 Sahadeva wounded Hṛdīkā's son
with twenty arrows,
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira did so with five,
Nakula with a hundred,

63 Draupadī's sons wounded him
with seventy-three arrows,
Ghaṭotkaca with seven,
and Dhṛṣṭadyumna with three,

64 Virāṭa, Drupada, Yājñaseni-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
each shot five arrows;
Śikhaṇḍin with five arrows
wounded Hṛdīka's son.

65 Smiling, he shot and wounded him
with twenty more.
Then, O rājā, Kṛtavarman, wounding
the mahā-chariot-heroes

66 Each with five arrows, pierced Bhīma
with seven more.
He sliced Bhīma's flagstaff
and sundered his bow.

67 Swiftly, burning with anger,
mahā-chariot-hero Kṛtavarman
wounded bow-sundered Bhīma's chest
with seventy sharp arrows.

68 With the arrows of Hṛdīka's son
sticking in his chest,
powerful Bhīma shook in his chariot,
like a hill in an earthquake.

69 O rājā, seeing Bhīma in deep trouble,
the Pāṇḍava warriors
led by Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
unitedly attacked Kṛtavarman.

70 Cornering Kṛtavarman with a ring of chariots,
the enraged Pāṇḍava warriors
harassed him with arrows,
trying to rescue Bhīma.

71 Mahā-powerful Bhīma recovered,
and brandished
a fearful, golden-staffed
and iron-headed *śakti*-spear.

72 From his chariot he fiercely hurled
that *śakti*
at Kṛtavarman's chariot.
That skin-sloughed-snake-resembling *śakti*

73 Dazzled fearfully as it sped
towards Kṛtavarman,
As the *śakti*, like a yuga-end fire,
rushed unerringly

74 Towards Hṛdīka's son,
he sliced it in two with two arrows.
The gold-decorated *śakti*,
bisected, fell on the earth

75 Where, O rājā,
it lit up all the four directions
like a flaming meteor.
His *śakti*'s failure enraged Bhīma.

76 He picked up a tremendously strong bow,
twanged it loudly,
and, infuriated, started attacking
Hṛdīka's son again.

77 O rājā, hugely powerful Bhīma
wounded Kṛtavarman's chest
with five arrows.
All this because of your ill policy.

78 O gracious monarch, the Bhoja ruler,
wounded all over his body,
looked on the battlefield
like a red-blossoming aśoka tree.

79 Though incensed, Kṛtavarman smiled
and shot three arrows at Bhīma,
and volleys of them
at other warriors.

80 The Sātvata mahā-chariot-hero,
rage-inspired,
smilingly sliced Śikhaṇḍin's bow
with a razor-sharp arrow.

81 His bow severed, infuriated Śikhaṇḍin,
as swiftly as possible,
brandished a sword and a shield decorated
with a hundred moons.

82 The powerful bowman Kṛtavarman wounded
the mahā-chariot-heroes
with three arrows each. They countered
with seven arrows each.

83 Whirling the gold-decorated sword,
a mahā-weapon,
Śikhaṇḍin flung it at the chariot
of Kṛtavarman.

84 O rājā, that mahā-sword sliced
his arrow-strung bow
and plunged into the ground
like a shining sky-body.

85 Meanwhile, many mahā-chariot-heroes
joined forces
and swiftly wounded Kṛtavarman
with arrow-showers.

86 O best of the Bharatas!
Discarding the shattered bow
and choosing a new one,
Hṛdīka's foe-slaying son

87 Wounded each Pāṇḍava
with three straight-flying shafts.
First with two arrows, then with five,
he wounded Śikhaṇḍin.

88 Mahā-renowed Śikhaṇḍin also,
with a fresh bow,
harassed Hṛdīka's son
with swift tortoise-mouthed shafts.

89 Then, O rājā, the infuriated son
of Hṛdīka
swooped upon the mahā-chariot-hero
son of Yajñasena,

90 Who, O rājā, had taken birth
to cause the death
of mahātmā Bhīṣma.
Like a tiger atacking an elephant,
Kṛtavarman displayed his valour
by attacking Śikhaṇḍin.

91 The two foe-crushers,
dazzling like two blazing fires,
rained arrows on each other
in clusters, battling
like the two elephants who guard
the points of the compass.

92 They pulled taut their splendid bows,
nocking many arrows.
Like two suns shooting countless sunrays,
they shot arrows.

93 The two mahā-chariot-heroes harassing
each other with shafts
looked as glorious as two blazing suns
at the end of a yuga.

94 In that battle, Kṛtavarman wounded
the mahā-chariot-hero son of Yajñasena
first with seventy-three,
then with seven arrows.

95 Grievously wounded, and in deep pain,
Śikhaṇḍin sat down in his chariot,
dropping his bow and arrows,
and almost fainted.

96 O bull-brave one! Seeing Śikhaṇḍin dispirited,
your warriors cheered
the feat of Hṛdīka's son,
flapping their uniforms.

97 Realising that Śikhaṇḍin was faint
after the arrow-attack of Hṛdīka's son,
his charioteer sped him away
from the field.

98 The sons of Pṛthā-Kuntī, seeing Śikhaṇḍin
slumped in his chariot,
quickly surrounded Kṛtavarman
with their chariots.

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99 The mahā-chariot hero Kṛtavarman
astonished his foes,
for only he was able to repulse
the Pāṇḍavas and their allies.

100 After repulsing the Pāṇḍavas,
Kṛtavarman the mahā-chariot-hero
defeated the Cedis, Pāñcālas, Sṛñjayas,
and the mahā-valiant Kekayas.

101 Decimated by the son of Hṛdīka
on the battlefield,
the disorganised and dispirited Pāṇḍavas
fled helter-skelter.

102 Defeating Bhīma and the other Pāṇḍavas
in open battle,
Hṛdīka's son shone on the battlefield
like a smokeless fire.

103 Vanquished by the son of Hṛdīka,
the mahā-chariot-heroes,
faced with endless showers of arrows,
turned face and fled.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN

1 O rājā, listen to me carefully
(continued Sañjaya)
for I am replying to the questions
you asked me.
After the Pāṇḍavas had been routed
by mahātmā-Kṛtavarman,

2 Shamefully so, and your warriors
were celebrating the feat,
it was Sātyaki who saved
the sinking Pāṇḍavas,
becoming as it were their island
in a sea of despair.

3 O rājā, it was Śini's grandson,
that great hero,
who heard the shouts and roars
of your warriors,
and swiftly turned back in order
to attack Kṛtavarman.

4 He ordered his charioteer angrily
and imperiously,
"Charioteer, drive my chariot
to where Kṛtavarman is.

5 See how arrogantly he scatters
the Pāṇḍavas!
I will defeat him, and then proceed
to help Vijaya-Arjuna."

6 Mahā-minded monarch!
No sooner had he ordered
than his charioteer drove him
to face Kṛtavarman.

7 Hṛdīka's son Kṛtavarman showered
clouds of arrows
on Śini's grandson,
which further enraged Sātyaki.

8 Quickly, the grandson of Śini
shot a stone-whetted *bhalla*-shaft
and four other arrows
at Kṛtavarman.

9 The *bhalla* sliced his bow,
the others killed his horses.
More shafts wounded his charioteer
and his flank supporter.

10 Rendering him chariotless,
immensely valiant Sātyaki
harassed his foe with showers
of depressed-knot arrows.

11 Oppressed by the arrows of Sātyaki,
the troops broke ranks.
The grandson of Śini continued
his offensive.

12 Mahārāja, let me narrate the feats
of that brave hero
as he cut through the ocean-opulent
army of Droṇa.

13 Defeating Kṛtavarman on the field,
Sātyaki cheerfully
ordered his charioteer,
"Charioteer, advance slowly."

14 Seeing your army
with all its chariot-heroes,
horses, elephants, and foot-soldiers,
he instructed his charioteer:

15 "See, on the left of Drona,
the elephant host –
a thick mass of dark clouds –
headed by Rukmaratha.

16 They are numerous and near-invincible
They are deployed by Duryodhana
to defeat me
or die doing so.

17 Without defeating them, O charioteer,
it is not possible
to capture Jayadratha nor is it possible
to rescue Pārtha-Arjuna.
These are all veteran warriors
skilled in the use
of war-weapons, and trained to fight
in united combat.

18 Mounted on these elephants
are the princes of Trigarta,
who are also great chariot-heroes.
They have golden flagstaffs.

19 These are the brave heroes facing me,
waiting to fight me.
Charioteer, drive me swiftly
to where they are.

20 I will battle the Trigartas
before the very eyes
of Bharadvāja's son."
The charioteer did as instructed.

21 Obedient to the charioteer's reins,
the steeds took Sātyaki to the field.
The flagged chariot
dazzled like the sun.

22 The steeds of Sātyaki's chariot
were wind-swift, silver-moon-lotus-bright.
Conches sounded
as Sātyaki advanced.

23 The Kaurava warriors on their elephants
surrounded Sātyaki,
shooting arrows sharp enough
to pierce any defence.

24 Sātyaki replied with arrows showered
on the elephants,
like end-of-summer clouds drenching hills
with torrential rain.

25 Wounded by the arrows of Śini's grandson
that pierced hides
as does Indra's thunderbolt,
the elephants broke ranks and fled.

26 They screamed and trumpeted and roared
like rain-cloud thunder.
With *nārācas*, calf-tooth-headed *vatsadantas,*
*bhallas, añjalikas,*

27 And razor-sharp *kṣuras*
and *ordhacandra* crescent-shaped arrows,
Sātyaki mutilated them. Bleeding,
oozing faeces and urine, they fled.

28 Their tusks broken,
their hides streaming blood,
heads, temples, ears, trunks severed,
rider-less, flag-less,

29 Skins lacerated, bells splintered,
flagstaffs sliced,
blankets blown off, warrior-less,
they fled devastated.

30 Some fell and rolled on the ground,
some limped,
some paled and whined.
Decimated by Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki

31 With sun-burning and fire-scorching shafts,
the elephants fled in all directions.
Witnessing the carnage,
mahā-mighty Jalasaṁdha

32 Powerfully goaded his elephant
to Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki's silver-horsed chariot.
Gold-armour-clad, gold-armleted,
pure of heart,

33 Earringed and diademed, sword in hand,
red sandalpaste-anointed,
on his head a dazzling garland
of gold,

34 On his chest a *niṣka*-pendant,
a glittering chain round his neck,
golden bow strung,
atop an elephant,

35 O mahārāja, Jalasaṁdha looked
like a lightning-charged cloud-cluster.
The Magadha ruler's
furiously charging elephant

36 Was stopped by Sātyaki like the shore
stopping the *makara*-inhabited sea.
Seeing his elephant blocked by the arrows
of Śini's grandson,

37 O rājā, mahā-powerful Jalasaṁdha
became enraged.
So infuriated, mahārāja,
that with massive broad arrows

38 Jalasaṁdha pierced the chest
of Śini's grandson.
Then, with a stone-sharpened
*bhalla*-arrow,

39 He sliced the bow
of the brave Vṛṣṇi hero.
Then, O Bharata, smiling,
he pierced Sātyaki's bow

40 And wounded his chest
with five sharp arrows.
Though pierced by the arrows
of Jalasaṁdha,

41 Strong-armed Sātyaki did not falter,
did not waver.
Wonderful! Powerful Sātyaki simply
ignored the arrows.

42 He picked up another bow and shouted:
"Wait! Stand where you are!"
Saying which, he pierced the broad chest
of Jalasaṁdha

43 With a flight of sixty arrows,
smiling as he did so.
Then, with a razor-headed arrow,
the massive bow

44 Of Jalasaṁdha was splintered,
and Jalasaṁdha injured with the others.
Throwing away the shattered bow
with its nocked arrows,

45 Jalasaṁdha hurled a *tomara* at Sātyaki.
O honour-bestowing monarch!
The lance pierced the left arm
of the Mādhava Sātyaki

46 And plunged into the ground,
like a huge hissing snake.
His left arm injured,
invincible Sātyaki nonetheless

47 Struck back, wounding Jalasaṁdha
with thirty sharp arrows.
Maha-powerful Jalasaṁdha retaliated
by brandishing a sword

48 And a hundred-moon-embossed shield
made of bull-hide.
Whirling the sword aloft, he flung it
at Śini's grandson.

49 Slicing the bow of Śini's grandson,
the sword fell on the earth,
and looked as beautiful
as a *cakra* of fire.

50 Picking up another, all-piercing bow,
as large as the branch of a śāla tree,
with a twang like the roar
of Indra's thunderbolt,

51 Anger-inflamed Sātyaki stretched it,
nocked an arrow,
and swiftly pierced Jalasaṁdha
with unerring aim.

52 Smiling, the finest of the Mādhavas
sliced off both the arms of Jalasaṁdha –
ornamented arms.
The mace-like arms fell

53 On the elephant's back
drenching the beast with blood
like two five-hooded snakes flopping
down a mountain slope.

54 With another razor-sharp arrow,
Sātyaki decapitated his foe –
a head with lovely teeth
and glittering earrings.

55 The horrendous headless and armless trunk
toppled bloodily down.
Slaughtering Jalasaṁdha on the field,
the Sātvata-descendant

56 Demolished the wooden platform
on the elephant's back.
O lord of the earth, the blood-drenched
elephant of Jalasaṁdha

57 Wildly dragged the opulent turret
behind it as it fled.
The huge arrow-pierced beast trampled
its own ranks

58 As it careened through the field,
trumpeting its agony.
O gracious monarch!
Your soldiers screamed "Hai! Hai!"

59 When they saw Jalasaṁdha killed
by the finest of Vṛṣṇis.
Turning their faces,
they fled in all directions.

60 Though realising the futility
of any hope of victory, O rājā,
they prepared to fight to the death.
Finest of weapons-experts Droṇa

61 Advanced towards the mahā-chariot-hero
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
on his swift chariot.
The Kauravas, seeing Śini's grandson,

62 Rushed angrily at him,
assisted by Droṇa himself.
O rājā, what followed
was a bitter battle
between the Kauravas on one side
led by Droṇa
and Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki on the other.
It resembled the battle
fought in the very distant past
between gods and anti-gods.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED-SIXTEEN

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1 Mahārāja (continued Sañjaya)
the foe-smitting warriors banded together,
showering countless arrows
at Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki.

2 Droṇa wounded Sātyaki
with seventy-seven sharp arrows,
Durmarṣaṇa with twelve,
and Duḥsaha with ten arrows.

3 Vikarṇa wounded him
with thirty *kaṅka*-winged arrows
on his left rib and in the centre
of his chest.

4 Durmukha wounded Śini's grandson
with ten arrows, O gracious monarch,
Duḥśāsana with eight,
and Citrasena with two arrows.

5 O rājā, Duryodhana let loose
an arrow-shower
on the Mādhava mahā-chariot-hero.
Others did the same.

6 Though surrounded by all
your mahā-chariot-hero sons,
the Vṛṣṇi descendant retaliated with shafts
for each of them.

7 Sātyaki wounded Bharadvāja's son Droṇa
with three arrows,
Duḥsaha with nine, Vikarṇa twentyfive,
Citrasena seven,

8 Durmarṣaṇa with twelve arrows,
Viviṁśati with eight,
Satyavrata with nine arrows,
and Vijaya with twelve.

9 After wounding Rukmāṅgada,
mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki
aimed his stretched bow
at mahā-chariot-hero Duryodhana.

10 With his arrows he wounded
the rājā of all the earth,
the mahā-chariot-hero of the earth.
And the battle began.

11 The thick showers of arrows
of the two mahā-chariot-heroes
fired in succession,
made each invisible.

12 Oppressed by the rājā of the Kurus,
Sātyaki glowed with streaming blood,
like a sandalwood tree
oozing sap.

13 Pierced by countless arrows
shot by the Sātvata hero,
your son glowed
like a golden sacrificial pole.

14 Then, O rājā, the Mādhava descendant, smiling,
with a razor-sharp arrow
sliced the bow
of the bow-expert Kuru-rājā.

15 With more arrows he wounded
his bow-splintered foe.
Lacerated by the arrows
of his dexterous adversary,

16 The rājā could not bear to see
his enemy succeeding,
so he lifted a formidable
gold-staffed bow

17 And wounded Sātyaki with a volley
of a hundred arrows.
Grievously wounded by that powerful bow-expert,
Sātyaki

18 Burned with rage and started harassing
your son.
Seeing your son perplexed,
your other mahā-chariot-hero sons

19 Drowned Sātyaki in a downpour
of sharp arrows.
Though oppressed
by your mahā-chariot-hero sons,

20 Sātyaki retaliated first with five,
then seven arrows, for each.
Quickly he wounded Duryodhana
with eight swift arrows.

21 Smiling, he sliced
Duryodhana's foe-terrorising bow
and flagstaff with its pearl-inlaid
elephant symbol.

22 With four sharp arrows he killed
Duryodhana's four horses,
and with a razor-headed arrow
the charioteer.

23 Overjoyed, he continued to oppress
the Kuru-rājā mahā-chariot-hero
with showers
of marrow-piercing arrows.

24 Wounded by the incomparable arrows
of Śini's grandson,
your son Duryodhana, O rājā,
fled the field,

25 And climbed into the chariot
of bow-expert Citrasena.
Your troops cried "Hai! Hai!"
seeing the rājā

26 Consumed by Sātyaki, like Soma the moon
consumed by Rāhu.
Hearing the uproar,
the mahā-chariot-hero Kṛtavarman

27 Rushed to the spot where valiant
Mādhava-Sātyaki was battling.
Urging his steeds,
and stretching his bow taut,

28 He shouted commands to his charioteer,
"Faster! Faster!"
Seeing him rushing on him like Antaka-Doom
with gaping jaws,

29 O mahā-rājā, Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
addressed his charioteer,
"Bow in hand, Kṛtavarman is speeding
towards me.

30 Drive your chariot
to face that expert bowman."
Urging to full speed
his excellently equipped horses,

31 The charioteer raced the vehicle
to face the Bhoja ruler,
a ruler honoured by all bowmen.
Infuriated, like two flames,

32 The two tigers-among-men
clashed like two agile tigers.
Kṛtavarman wounded Śini's grandson
with twenty-six

33 Excellently whetted sharp arrows;
with five his charioteer;
with four wondrous shafts
he killed the four horses

34 Of the Sātvata hero –
handsome-toothed Sindhu horses.
Stretching taut his massive golden bow,
the golden-flagged,

35 Golden-armleted, golden coat-of-mailed,
golden-arrow-shooting
grandson of Śini
blocked the attack of Kṛtavarman,

36 Because he wanted to get a glimpse
of Arjuna.
Wounded grievously by his adversary,
foe-scorching Kṛtavarman

37 Trembled like a mountain swaying
in an earthquake.
Four steeds with sixty-three arrows,
charioteer with seven –

38 In this manner incredibly accomplished
Sātyaki fought his foe.
Then Sātyaki nocked
a gold-winged shaft,

39 Blazing bright, looking like a provoked,
angry snake –
that shaft was to Kṛtavarman
like Yama's rod of doom.

40 That fatal shaft sizzled through
the dazzling gold armour
of Kṛtavarman, who collapsed
in a pool of blood.

41 Dripping blood,
lacerated by the Sātvata hero's arrows,
Kṛtavarman flung aside his bow and arrow,
and fell in his chariot.

42 Illimitably illustrious, lion-toothed,
bull-brave Kṛtavarman,
sliced by Satyaki's arrows, fell on his knees
in his chariot.

43 Vanquishing Kṛtavarman, who was like
thousand-armed Kārtavīrya-Arjuna,
like the unharmable ocean itself,
Sātyaki pressed forward.

44 Through hundreds and hundreds of Ksatriyas,
brandishing swords,
*śakti*-spears, bows, lances, streaming with blood
from grievous wounds;
through elephants and horses and chariots
on the battlefield –

45 Before the very eyes of the soldiers,
the noble Śini-descendant
cleaved his way, like the slayer of Vṛtra
through the anti-gods.

46 In the meantime, the son of Hṛdīka
recovered,
and lifting another bow he made plans
to check the advancing Pāṇḍavas.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEEN

1 Though the Kuru warriors (said Sañjaya)
quaked while Śini's grandson passed,
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa blocked him
with showers of arrows.

2 A dreadful battle started
between Droṇa and the Sātvata,
witnessed by all – a battle like the one
between Bali and Vāsava-Indra.

3 Droṇa wounded the forehead
of Śini's grandson
with three lovely iron shafts
looking like poisonous snakes.

4 Mahārāja, with those straight-flying shafts
sticking in his forehead,
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki looked as enchanting
as a three-peaked mountain.

5 Seizing this chance, the son of Bharadvāja
fired at Sātyaki more arrows
that roared straight ahead
like Indra's thunderbolt.

6 The all-weapons-expert Dāśārha-descendant
shot down the shafts of Droṇa
speeding towards him
with two lovely-winged arrows.

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7 O lord of the world!
Droṇa smiled at his dexterous feat,
and harassed Śini's descendant
with thirty sharp arrows.

8 Excelling the wizardry of Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
with his own skill,
he wounded his foe
with fifty super-sharp arrows.

9 O rājā, like huge snakes, roused,
rushing out of ant-hills,
countless arrows sped
from the chariot of Droṇa.

10 Similarly, hundreds and thousands
of blood-sucking arrows,
shot by Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
shrouded Droṇa's chariot.

11 We could not tell whose dexterity
was superior –
the foremost twice-born's or the Sātvata's,
O gracious monarch.

12 Roused to fever fury,
Sātyaki shot nine arrows
with depressed knots at Droṇa,
and more at his war-flag,

13 And at Droṇa's charioteer,
before Droṇa's very eyes.
Despite Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki's excellence,
mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa

14 Wounded the Mādhava descendant's charioteer
with seventy arrows,
his horses with three arrows each,
and sliced his flagstaff with one.

15 With another broad-headed,
gold-feathered *bhalla*-shaft
he splintered the bow
of the famed Mādhava hero.

16 The mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki,
rage-inflamed,
threw aside his bow and hurled a mace
at Bharadvāja's son Droṇa.

17 Shooting a variety of arrows,
Droṇa blocked
the silk-cloth-encased iron mace
whirling towards him.

18 Truth-valiant Sātyaki picked up
another bow
and wounded Bharadvāja's son
with stone-whetted shafts.

19 Wounding Droṇa on the battlefield,
he lion-roared his war-cry,
which infuriated
all-weapons-expert Droṇa.

20 Picking up a golden-staffed
and iron-headed *śakti*-spear,
Droṇa flung it at the chariot
of the Mādhava.

21 That *śakti*-spear, like Kāla-Doom itself,
fell short of Sātyaki,
but damaged his chariot
and plunged noisily in the earth.

22 Then, O rājā, Śini's grandson wounded
Droṇa's right arm
with feathered arrows. Droṇa was in agony,
O bull-brave Bharata.

23 But Droṇa with a crescent-arrow
sliced the great bow
of the Mādhava, and with a *śakti*
injured his charioteer.

24 The *śakti*-spear struck the charioteer
of Sātyaki
with such force that he swooned
in the vehicle.

25 Then, O rājā, Sātyaki performed
a superhuman feat –
he battled with Droṇa and simultaneously
he drove his chariot.

26 O lord of the world! Delightedly
the mahā-chariot-hero Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
wounded his Brahmin foe
with a hundred arrows.

27 O Bharata-descendant!
Droṇa shot five fearful arrows
which pierced his armour
and started sucking his blood.

28 Those blood-sucking arrows roused Sātyaki
to a tremendous rage,
and he began showering arrows
at golden-charioted Droṇa.

29 With a single arrow he toppled
Droṇa's charioteer;
with other arrows, he made the horses
flee the field.

30 O raja! Dragged all over the field,
the silver chariot
spun in a thousand dazzling maṇḍalas,
like a revolving sun.

31 "Run! Stop Droṇa's wild horses!"
were the shouts
heard from rājās and sons of rājās
on the battlefield.

32 O rājā, all the mahā-chariot-heroes,
abandoning Sātyaki,
rushed to the spot
where Droṇa's horses were fleeing.

33 Seeing the warriors harassed and routed
by the Sātvata hero,
your soldiers succumbed to fear
and began retreating.

34 Droṇa managed to position himself
at the army's front,
despite the wind-swift flight
of his harassed horses.

35 Wondrously valiant Droṇa saw his ranks
dispersed by the Pāñcālas and Pāṇḍavas,
and instead of fighting Sātyaki,
he re-deployed his army.

36 Facing the Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas,
the Droṇa-fire ignited by wrath,
stood firm, all-devouring, like the blazing sun
of all-consuming Kāla.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEEN

1 Sañjaya continued:
Defeating in battle
Droṇa and others
led by Kṛtavarman,
the finest of Śinis
Sātyaki, smiling,
turned to his charioteer,
O bull-brave Kaurava,
and said to him:

2 "Charioteer, our foes
have tasted defeat
from Kesava-Krishna
and Phālguna-Arjuna.
Defeating them again,
we did nothing special.
Killing those already killed
by Indra's bull-brave son
was just to overkill."

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3 Addressing his charioteer,
the best of the Śinis,
the magnificent bowman,
the slayer of foes,
the valiant warrior,
shooting his arrows
in all directions,
pounced on the Kauravas
like a hawk on meat.

4 Attack though they did,
the Kaurava warriors
were unable to check
that great chariot-hero
was shone like the thousand-
rayed sun itself
and advanced on the Kauravas
on horses as white
as the moon or a conch.

5 None of your warriors,
O Bharata, stopped Yuyudhāna-
Sātyaki, whose prowess
was invincible, whose energy
unlimited, whose valour
equalled the valour
of thousand-eyed Indra,
who looked as resplendent
as the autumnal sun.

6 Then Sudarśana,
the foremost of rulers,
in war-skills an expert,
encased in gold armour,
blazing in anger,
manoeuvred his chariot
to prevent the advance
of resistless Sātyaki
on the field of battle.

7 O Bharata! The clash
between the two heroes
was an awesome duel.
Your troops and the Somakas
applauded the battle,
And the gods declared
it equal to the clash
between Indra and Vṛtra
in the distant past.

8 Assiduously, O rājā,
Sudarśana discharged
hundreds of arrows
at the finest descendant
of the Sātvata race,
but the Śini descendant,
discharging his own,
sliced them midway
before they could reach him.

9 And Sudarśana likewise,
riding his chariot
excellently crafted,
with his own arrows
retaliating, sliced,
in two or three fragments,
the arrows discharged
by Sātyaki who resembled
Śakra-Indra himself.

10 Noticing his arrows
repulsed by the skill
of the arrows discharged
by Sātyaki, Sudarśana,
the fiery warrior,
to burn his opponent,
angrily released
a shower of lovely
gold-feathered shafts.

11 Pulling his bowstring
to the top of his ear,
he wounded his foe
with three lovely arrows –
golden-winged arrows –
as fatal as fire.
They pierced the armour
of Sātyaki, and mangled
the body of the hero.

12 With four shining shafts
fixed in his bow,
once again the brave
prince Sudarśana
attacked the four horses –
silvery steeds –
of Sātyaki, wounding
them vitally
on the battlefield.

13 Afflicted by Sudarśana,
the grandson of Śini,
remarkably nimble
and possessed of valour
equalling Indra's,
speedily slew
with his arrows the steeds
of Sudarśana, and screamed
his pealing war war-cry.

14 With a broad-headed *bhalla*
shot with the force
of Śakra-Indra's thunderbolt,
he cut off the head
of Sudarśana's charioteer;
then the finest of Śinis,
with a razor-sharp arrow
that blazed like the fire
of Kāla at doomsday,

15 Sliced from the trunk
of brave Sudarśana
his ear-ringed head,
his full-moon handsome head,
his enchanting-faced head,
exactly, O rājā,
as the thunderbolt-wielder
Indra decapitated
Bala in the past.

16 Elate with his slaughter
of the heroic grandson
of a prince, O rājā,
the bull-brave warrior
of the Yādava race,
mahātmā Sātyaki
shone with the splendour
of the rājā of the gods,
Indra himself.

17 And then, O rājā,
that finest of heroes
followed the track
of Arjuna, attacking
your warriors with arrows
as he advanced
in his splendid chariot
pulled by splendid horses,
filling all with awe.

18 The magnificent warriors
on the field of battle
applauded the wonderful
feat of Sātyaki,
obliterating all foes
within arrow-range,
like a conflagration
that consumes whatever
lies in its way.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED NINETEEN

1 The bull-brave Vṛṣṇi (continued Sañjaya),
mahātmā Sātyaki,
wise Sātyaki, after killing Sudarśana,
said to his charioteer:

2 "Chariots
Horses
Elephants –
Arrows and *śakti*-spears
the waves
Swords
the fishes
Maces
the crocodiles –
War-shouts
the thunder
Clanging weapons
the mahā-cacophony–

3 Fierce
Life-destroying
Reverberating
with war-noises
of military music
Whose mere touch
makes soldiers shudder
despairing of victory –

4 Whose shores
harbour flesh-eaters
(Jalasaṁdha's warriors) –
We have crossed
that fearful mahā-ocean-army
of Droṇa.

5 The rest is a stream.
It is shallow water.
It can easily be crossed,
Therefore, he fearless,
And speed the chariot forward.

6 I think I have Savyāsacī-Arjuna
safe, now, at last.
After vanquishing formidable Droṇa
and his allies,

7 Along with the excelling son of Hṛdīka,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
is finally mine. I am not afraid
of the troops facing me,

8 Because a raging forest fire does not fear
heaps of dry grass.
See, in front of you is the ground
diademed Arjuna passed,

9 Made uneven by slain soldiers, horses,
chariot-heroes and elephants.
Mahātmā Arjuna is routing
his enemies!

10 Look, charioteer!
A thick cloud of red silky dust
is raised by the scattering chariots,
elephants and horses.

11 I can hear the twang
of the Gāṇḍīva bow;
I must go near the white-horsed chariot
of Krishna.

12 All the omens appearing before me
indicate that Arjuna
will kill the ruler of the Sindhus
before sunset today.

13 Without tiring them, drive the horses
near the enemy ranks,
where Duryodhana's warriors are,
wearing leather hand-guards;

14 Where the carnage-creating Kāmbojas,
armour-clad, difficult to defeat,
where the fierce-smiting,
bow-and-arrow-armed Yavanas are;

15 Where the Śakas and Kirātas,
 Daradas and Barbaras
and Tāmraliptas
 and other variously armed *mlecchas* are;

16 Yes, where the warriors of Duryodhana,
 with leather hand-guards,
are waiting, with faces turned towards me,
 determined to fight me.

17 Imagine, O charioteer,
 that I have already killed
all these warriors in chariots,
 these horses, elephants and soldiers."

18 "Scion of the Vṛṣṇis," replied the charioteer,
 "indomitable one,
even if Jamadagni-Paraśurāma were facing me,
 I would not fear.

19 O mahā-muscled one, protected by you,
 I would not fear
the finest chariot-hero Droṇa or Kṛpa
 or the Madra-ruler.

20 O slayer of foes, countless mail-encased,
 carnage-creating,
difficult-to-defeat Kāmbojas
 have already been defeated by you;

21 As well as fierce-smiting,
 bow-and-arrow-armed Yavanas,
and Śakas, Kirātas, Daradas, Barbaras
 and Tāmraliptas,

22 And many other *mlecchas*
 armed with a variety of weapons.
Not once in any battle
 did I feel afraid.

23 Why should I fear now,
 in this cow's-hoof-size battle?
O long-lived one, which track shall I take
 to reach Dhanañjaya-Arjuna?

24 Who are these who have so angered you,
O great Vṛṣṇi?
For whom is death waiting?
Who wish to enter death's realm?

25 Seeing you like Kāla at dooms-day,
displaying your prowess,
who are these who will flee wildly
from the battlefield?

26 O mighty-armed one,
who has the rājā of death Vaivasvata
remembered today?"
Sātyaki answered:
"Like Vāsava-Indra killing the Dānavas,
I will kill them today,
all these shaven-headed warriors.

27 I will kill the Kāmbojas.
I promise this.
Drive me there. I will meet Arjuna,
the Pāṇḍava whom I love.

28 The Kurus, led by Suyodhana-Duryodhana,
will witness my prowess
when I wipe out this host
of shaven-headed warriors

29 And scatter the Kauravas
on the battlefield.
Their lamentations will desolate
Suyodhana-Duryodhana.

30 Today, I will show my ācārya,
the white-horsed Śvetavāhana
mahātmā-Pāṇḍava Arjuna,
the skills I learnt from him.

31 Today, rājā Duryodhana will repent
when he sees me
killing hundreds and thousands
of his warriors.

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32 So swiftly will I string and re-string
my bow today
that the Kauravas will see it
as a flaming *cakra.*

33 Seeing the unending slaughter
of his bloodied troops,
all arrow-pierced,
Suyodhana-Duryodhana will repent.

34 When I angrily decimate the Kauravas
one by one,
Suyodhana-Duryodhana will think
there are two Arjunas!

35 Rājā Duryodhana will grievously repent
when he sees me
killing hundreds of rājās today
on the mahā-battleground.

36 I will show my love and bhakti
for the Pāṇḍavas,
the mahātmā warriors,
by killing these thousands of rājās.

37 Today the Kauravas will realise
how strong I am,
what energy I have,
how grateful I can be."
Hearing these words (Sañjaya continued),
the charioteer
drove ahead his well-trained,
obedient horses,

38 As pure-white as the moon.
Those excellent horses
seemed to drink in the sky,
as they sped Yuyudhana-Sātyaki

39 With the swiftness of wind
to the Yavana ranks.
Seeing the unretreating hero Sātyaki
in their midst,

40 The swift-shooting Yavanas showered him
with arrows.
Slicing their arrows and weapons
with depressed-knot shafts, swift

41 Sātyaki ensured that not one arrow
could reach him.
With sharp, gold-winged arrows,
vulture-feathred arrows,

42 Sātyaki cut off the heads and arms
of the Yavanas,
shredding their steel
or brass armour.

43 Slicing through their bodies,
the arrows plunged in the earth.
Slaughtered by Sātyaki
on the field of battle, *mlecchas,*

44 Hundreds of them,
lay lifeless on the ground.
Bow stretched to the full,
shooting arrows continuously,

45 He killed simultaneously
five, six, seven, even eight Yavanas.
O lord of the world! *Viśāmpate*!
Hundreds of Śakas and Kāmbojas,

46 Śaberas, Kirātas, Barbaras and others
in mangled heaps
made the ground slippery
with the mire of mutilated flesh.

47 Such was the carnage Sātyaki perpetrated
in your army.
The field was littered with robbers' headgear,
and the shaven heads

48 With long beards looked like featherless
baby birds.
Strewn with headless trunks
streaming blood, the field

49 Looked like the sky
cluttered with copper-red clouds.
With thunderbolt-fierce
and deep-knotted swift shafts

50 Shot by Sātyaki, the slain Yavanas
choked the field.
The few mail-clad soldiers, defeated,
remaining there,

51 Routed by Sātyaki, were, O mahārāja,
completely dispirited.
Realising there was no hope left for them,
they fled

52 In fear, whipping their horses
and spurring them to top speed.
O Bharata,
defeating the Kāmbojas,

53 The Yavanas
and the hugely powerful Śaka army,
truth-valiant, tiger-among-men,
heroic Sātyaki

54 Penetrated deep into your ranks,
scattering them,
and ordered his charioteer:
"Forward! Forward!"
Witnessing a battle feat never before
performed by anyone,

55 The Cāraṇas and the Gandharvas
offered him respectful pūjā.
O lord of the world, seeing him enter
the rear ranks of Arjuna's forces,
the Cāraṇas exulted.
Even your troops applauded.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWENTY

1 Routing the Yavanas and Kāmbojas
(continued Sañjaya)
excelling chariot-hero Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
advanced to reinforce Arjuna.

2 Handsome-toothed, tiger-among-men Satyaki,
glorious-flagged and glorious-armoured,
like a tiger stalking deer,
terrorised your troops.

3 Standing in his chariot,
he brandished his swift-shooting bow,
whose shaft was gold-decorated,
and gold-moon-embossed all over.

4 Armlets of gold
Headgear of gold
Golden coat-of-mail
Flagstaff of gold
Golden bow –
The brave warrior
Looked like the peak
Of Meru mountain.

5 Radiating resplendence, and brandishing
a bow drawn taut
like a maṇḍala, he shone with the glory
of the sun in autumn.

6 With shoulders, gait and eyes like a bull's,
that bull-among-men
appeared among your troops like a bull
in a herd of cows.

7 Seeing him, elephant-gaited-graceful,
like a musth elephant
with rutting temples, suddenly appearing
in their midst,

8 Your soldiers attacked,
determined to kill him.
After he had crossed Droṇa's troops
and the uncrossable Bhojas,

[VII:120:9-17]

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9 And the Jalasaṁdha sea, the Kāmbojas,
the crocodiles of Hṛdīka's son –
after crossing
that ocean-army –

10 Sātyaki was encircled
by your army's infuriated chariot-heroes.
Duryodhana and Citrasena,
Duḥśāsana and Viviṁśati,

11 Śakuni, Duḥsaha, youthful Durdharṣa,
Krātha and other brave warriors,
expert in all weapons,
difficult to defeat,

12 Angrily followed Sātyaki,
trailing him as he advanced.
O gracious monarch, a fearsome din arose
from your army's ranks,

13 Like the roar of the wind-lashed ocean
on a *parva*-day.
Seeing them rushing to attack him,
the illustrious Śini Sātyaki

14 Smiled, and advised his charioteer,
"Advance slowly.
The powerful army of the rage-filled sons
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra,

15 Replete with elephants, horses, chariots
and foot-soldiers,
is attacking me, drowning the quarters
with chariot-noise,

16 And making the earth, the sky-dome
and the quarters tremble.
Charioteer, I shall block this army
in battle

17 Like the seashore blocking the swelling
full-moon sea,
the crocodile-abode.
My valour is like the valour of Indra.

18 See me annihilate my foes
with sharp arrows.
See them killed – foot-soldiers, elephants,
horses, chariot-heroes –

19 Mutilated by my sharp arrows
scorching them like fire."
Even as incalculably puissant Sātyaki
was saying this,

20 Your warriors quickly faced him,
poised for battle,
shouting: "Run!" "Kill!" "Wait!"
"Look! Look!"

21 While they were shouting,
Sātyaki shot his sharp arrows,
killing three hundred horses
and four hundred elephants.

22 A horrendous battle commenced
between Sātyaki and your troops,
as bloody as the carnage in the past
between gods and anti-gods.

23 O gracious monarch, Śini's grandson
countered the cloud-massive attack
of your son's forces
with virulent snake-venomed shafts.

24 Mahārāja, though shrouded with shafts,
valiant Sātyaki,
completely fearless, slaughtered hundreds
of your warriors.

25 O Indra-among-rājās!
How māhā-wonderful!
Not a single arrow of Sātyaki
missed its target, O *prabhu*-lord!

26 Your colossal ocean-army of chariots,
horses, elephants –
the chariots its waves –
striking the Śini-grandson-shore –

27 A horde of warriors, elephants, horses,
terrorised by the arrows of Sātyaki,
seemed to spin round
in circles,

28 Swirling here and there
like cows in a freezing winter.
Foot-soldiers, chariot-heroes, elephants,
horses, horse-riders –

29 We saw none spared by the arrows
of Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki.
O rājā, even Phālguna-Arjuna
never wreaked such havoc

30 As Sātyaki did in your army's ranks.
O bull-among-men,
Śini's grandson's skill
excelled that of Arjuna,

31 So fearless was he,
he showed such swiftness,
such arms-expertise.
With three arrows, rājā Duryodhana

32 Wounded the Sātvata-hero's charioteer,
with four his horses,
with three Sātyaki,
followed by eight more sharp arrows.

33 Duḥśāsana wounded the Śini scion
with sixteen arrows,
Śakuni wounded him with twenty-five,
Citrasena with five.

34 With fifteen more, Duḥśāsana pierced
Sātyaki's chest.
Thus pierced, the tiger-hero of the Vṛṣṇis
smiled,

35 And, O mahārāja, he wounded all three
with three arrows each.
Harassing his foes with arrows
of incredible speed,

36 The grandson of Śini circled the field
like a hawk.
Slicing the bow of Subala's son Śakuni,
severing his gloves,

37 He pierced the chest of Duryodhana
with three arrows,
Citrasena with a hundred,
and Duḥsaha with ten.

38 The Śini-bull wounded Duḥśāsana with twenty.
O lord of the world!
Then, your brother-in-law Śakuni
fitted another bow

39 And wounded Sātyaki first with eight,
then five, arrows.
Duḥśāsana wounded him with ten,
Duḥsaha with five;

40 And Durmukha, O rājā, with twelve.
O Bharata-ruler,
Duryodhana wounded the Mādhava-scion
with seventy-three arrows,

41 And his charioteer with three
very sharp arrows.
But all those mahā-chariot-heroes,
fighting steadfastly,

42 Were wounded, with five arrows each,
by Sātyaki,
the excellent chariot-hero
who next pierced your son's charioteer

43 Fatally with a broad-headed *bhalla*-arrow.
*Prabhu*! Lord!
He toppled, dead, on the ground.
Your chariot-hero son

44 Was carried away in the driver-less chariot
by its wind-swift horses.
O lord of the world, O rājā,
your other sons and soldiers,

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45 Seeing the rājā's chariot running wild,
fled in thousands.
O Bharata, seeing your soldiers panicking,
Sātyaki

46 Confounded them further with sharp
stone-whetted, gold-winged shafts.
Then, slaughtering thousands
of your warriors,

47 Sātyaki rushed to Arjuna's white-horsed chariot.
O gracious monarch,
seeing mahā-powerful Sātyaki
speed past,

48 Your soldiers pretended not to see,
and looked away.
Sātyaki defended his charioteer and himself
from their arrows
with ease – and earned the pujā respect
of your soldiers.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-ONE

1 "Tell me, Sañjaya," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"what my shameless sons did,
seeing Śini's grandson speeding to Arjuna
after routing my mahā-army.

2 Facing death, how did they decide
to fight Sātyaki
who appeared before them like ambidexterous
Savyasacī-Arjuna himself?

3 Their Kṣatriya-valour vanquished,
what did they do?
How did mahā-famed Sātyaki
sweep through them?

4 How was it possible, Sañjaya,
for Śini's grandson
to evade my very much alive sons?
Tell me, Sañjaya.

5 *Tāta*, dear one, what you tell me
is so incredible –
one against many – against so many
mahā-chariot-heroes!

6 It's their ill luck, I think –
so many mahā-chariot-heroes
decimated by a single
Satvata-warrior!

7 Forget the sons of Pāṇḍu, Sañjaya –
my entire army
humbled in battle by one warrior –
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki!

8 Like a lion killing small beasts,
Sātyaki killed the troops
of my sons, after defeating the veteran
valiant Droṇa.

9 Kṛtavarman and other brave heroes
tried their best
but failed to kill the bull-among-men
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki.

10 Even Phālguna-Arjuna never displayed
such war-skill
as did that mahā-famed grandson
of Śini."

11 O rājā (said Sañjaya), listen to me.
Please listen carefully, O Bharata.
Your ill advice and Duryodhana's ill deeds
are responsible for this.

12 Ordered by your son, your warriors
vowed to fight on –
a fearful resolve. Though defeated,
they re-grouped.

13 Three thousand warriors rallied
when ordered by Duryodhana
to follow him. Śakas, Kāmbojas, Bāhlīkas,
Yavanas, Pāradas,

14 Kulindas, Taṅganas, Ambaṣṭhas, Paiśacas,
Barbaras, and hill-warriors,
armed with stones, fiercely roused,
O Indra-among-rājās,

15 Rushed at Śini's grandson
like moths into a flame.
Stone-wielding hill-warriors,
riding in chariots –

16 Five hundred of them, O rājā,
unitedly attacked Śini's grandson,
Then, a thousand chariot-heroes,
a hundred mahā-chariot-heroes,

17 A thousand elephants,
two thousand heroes on horses,
more mahā-chariot-heroes and soldiers –
a countless host –

18 Attacked, O ruler of the Bharatas,
Śini's grandson.
Exhorting them and shouting
"Kill him!"

19 Duḥśāsana completely encircled Sātyaki,
O mahārāja.
There we witnessed the wonderful skill
of Śini's grandson,

20 As, single-handed, he fiercely fought off
his assailants,
systematically decimating chariot-heroes,
elephant-warriors,

21 Horse-riders, and hordes
of loot-and-kill *dasyūs.*
Disintegrated wheels,
smashed by wondrous weapons,

22 Countless *akṣa*-chariots
and chariot-axles destroyed,
elephants butchered, flagstaffs splintered
and shattered,

23 Coats of mail and shields scattered
on the field,
and soldiers' corpses, O gracious monarch,
with garlands, ornaments, dresses,

24 Made the earth glitter
like a star-spangled sky.
O Bharata, hill-huge, splendid elephants
littered the field –

25 Elephants of the Añjana
and Vāmana pedigree –
and, O Bharata, of the Supratīka
and the Mahāpadma breeds –

26 Of the Airāvata and other exclusive breeds,
O rājā –
mighty-tusked elephants all of them,
slaughtered in battle.

27 Sātyaki killed countless horses too,
O rājā,
of the Vanāyu, Kāmboja, Bāhlīka
and hill breeds.

28 Śini's grandson killed
many huge-tusked elephants also,
of various breeds, from various territories,
thousands of them.

29 While this slaughter went on,
Duḥśāsana ordered the *dasyūs:*
"Dharma-less warriors! Fight! Fight!
Why run away?"

30 When they refused to obey,
your son Duḥśāsana turned
to the valiant stone-wielding hill-warriors,
and urged them:

31 "Stone-wielding heroes!
Sātyaki is ignorant of stone-warfare.
He is eager to fight, though knowing nothing.
Kill him!

32 The entire Kaurava army is ignorant
of such warfare.
Attack Sātyaki! He will not be able
to touch you."

33 Like ministers surrounding a rājā,
all the stone-wielding hill-warriors
assaulted the single rājā Sātyaki.
Poised in attack-formation,

34 Armed with elephant-head-sized boulders,
the hill-dwellers
encircled Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
Poised in attack-formation,

35 Urged by your son
to kill the Sātvata hero,
armed they stood, obscuring the points
of the directions.

36 Even as they converged upon him
with stone-missiles,
Satyaki discharged a volley
of sharp arrows at them.

37 The bull-brave hero of the Śinis
splintered their stones
with a shower of sharp
snake-venomous *nārāca*-arrows.

38 O gracious monarch! The stone-splinters,
like radiant fireflies,
wrought havoc among your soldiers.
They fled, screaming "Hai! Hai!"

39 Still holding huge boulders, O rājā,
five hundred soldiers,
brave warriors all, their arms severed,
toppled on the ground.

40 Another thousand, and another hundred thousand,
their arms sliced off,
toppled and died, failing to come
anywhere near Sātyaki.

41 Slaughtered by the *bhalla*-arrows
of the Sātvata hero,
the *mlecchas* fell, mangled
by the flying stone-splinters.

42 But before dying, they let loose
massive stone-showers
on the hero of the Sātvatas,
mahātmā Sātyaki.

43 The stone-wielding warriors continued
to stand firm on the field,
though Sātyaki slew thousands.
It was strange!

44 They re-grouped and retaliated,
showering stones and tridents
on Sātyaki – the Daradas, Taṅganas,
and the Khasas,

45 The Lampakas and the Kulindas.
They harassed Sātyaki,
but he routed them with volleys
of *nārāca*-arrows.

46 Terrified by the horrendous noise
of shaft-splintered stones,
chariot-heroes, horses, elephants
and foot-soldiers fled.

47 They fled as if stung by swarms
of fierce bees –
the stone-fragment-pelted men,
elephants and horses.

48 O rājā, those who survived –
of the elephant host –
had temples and trunks drenched
with blood, tusks broken,

49 Trappings torn – hundreds of them
scattered and lost.
O gracious monarch!
In a flash killing five hundred warriors,

Transcreated by P. Lal

50 Sātyaki pierced through the ranks
to midfield.
The wounded elephants retreated
from Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki.

51 The noise of stones splintered
by arrows, rolling,
was like the noise of a waterfall
on a lake of lotuses.

52 O gracious monarch!
The noise resembled the reverberation
of the ocean on the night
of the full moon *parva.*

53 Hearing that fearful cacophony,
Droṇa turned and said
to his charioteer,
"The Sātvata mahā-chariot-hero, angered,

54 Has repeatedly routed my ranks
and rules the field like Kāla himself.
Charioteer,
drive me to the noise of battle.

55 Surely Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki has clashed
with the stone-warriors,
for I can see the chariot-heroes
fleeing the field.

56 I see them collapsing everywhere,
their bodies mutilated;
I see the charioteers
unable to control their horses."

57 Hearing these words
of the son of Bharadvāja,
the charioteer replied
to all-weapons-expert Droṇa:

58 "Long-lived one, the Kaurava army
is scattering helter-skelter.
Look at the soldiers running,
deserting their ranks!

59 And look at the Pāṇḍavas
and Pāñcālas –
heroically they are advancing
to confront you.

60 Destroyer of foes! Now is the time
for you to decide what should be done.
Stay here?
Or go to distant Sātyaki?"

61 Even as the charioteer said this
to Bharadvāja's son,
Śini's grandson could be seen decimating
numerous chariot-heroes.

62 Your soldiers, assaulted by the might
of Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
fled for safety to the ranks
of Droṇa's army.

63 The other chariot-heroes also,
accompanying Duḥśāsana,
panicked and fled to the safety
of Droṇa's chariot.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-TWO

1 Seeing Duḥśāsana's chariot alongside his
(continued Sañjaya),
excelling chariot-hero Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
advanced to reinforce Arjuna.

2 "Duḥśāsana, all these chariots –
fleeing from whom?
Is the king safe?
Is the Saindhava Jayadratha alive?

3 You are a rājā's son, a rājā's brother,
a maha-chariot-hero.
You are a rājā-regent.
Why are you running away?

4 'You are our slave.
We won you in the dice-game.
You will slake our lust,
feed our kāma as we wish.
You will dress my elder brother,
the rājā.

5 You are husbandless.
Your husbands are eunuchs,
sesamum seeds without kernel.'
Remember, Duḥśāsana,
your words to Draupadī?
And now – you are running away?

6 Remember, you fomented mahā-bitterness
between the Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas?
And now you flee in fear
from single Sātyaki?

7 Long ago, when you played the dice,
did you not see the day would come
when the dice would turn
into venomous snake-arrows?

8 Remember the ugly words you used
against the Pāṇḍavas?
Remember the pain caused to Draupadī?
You were the root cause.

9 Where now is your pride, your self-esteem,
your valour, your roaring?
Where will you fly after provoking
Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons?

10 How sad for the Bharata army!
How sad for the kingdom!
How sad for Suyodhana-Duryodhana!
– That they should live to see
A determined brother,
Duryodhana's brother,
Flee from the field of battle!

11 Brave one,
This broken, fear-gripped army
Surely deserves to be protected
By the mighty valour
Of your arms.

12 Instead, you are fleeing the field,
delighting your enemies.
O destroyer of foes,
if you, the leader, behave like this –

13 If the protector is afraid,
will the protected not fear?
You are faced with a single
Sātvata adversary,

14 And that's enough to frighten you
away from battle!
When, O Kaurava, the Gāṇḍīva-wielder,
and Bhīma,

15 And the twins are seen by you on the field,
what will you do?
Phālguna-Arjuna's arrows dazzle
like the sun, like fire.

16 They excel Sātyakī's arrows,
from which you are running away.
Run, brave one! Hide in your mother
Gāndhārī's womb,

17 For I see no other place on earth
that can save you.
If indeed you have made up your mind
to run away,

18 Hand over lordship of the earth
to Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
peacefully. Before Phālguna-Arjuna's arrows,
like slough-freed snakes,

19 Pierce your flesh,
make peace with the Pāṇḍavas.
Before Pārtha-Arjuna kills
your hundred brothers,

20 And snatches the earth from you,
make peace with the Pāṇḍavas.
Before Dharma's son, rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
is inflamed by anger,

21 Along with war-eulogising Krishna,
make peace with the Pāṇḍavas.
Before mahā-powerful Bhīma pierces
your massive formations,

22 And makes your brothers captive,
make peace with the Pāṇḍavas.
Long ago, Bhīṣma advised your brother
Suyodhana-Duryodhana:

23 'Gentle one, the Pāṇḍavas are invincible.
Make peace with them.'
But your ill-minded brother Suyodhana-Duryodhana
refused to listen.

24 So, be brave, and decide to fight
the Pāṇḍavas.
I have heard that Bhīma has vowed
to drink your blood.

25 He never vows in vain.
What he vows, will happen.
Don't you know of the incredible prowess
of Bhīma?

26 What made you antagonise him?
You running away like this!
Go! Quickly drive your chariot
to where Sātyaki is.

27 If your presence is not there,
the army will flee, O Bharata.
For your own good, fight Sātyaki
of illustrious fame."

28 Your son listened to Droṇa's words,
and kept silent.
Pretending he had not heard,
he proceeded to where Sātyaki was.

29 With a huge force
of never-retreating Mlecchas,
Duḥśāsana launched a fierce attack
on Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki.

30 Meanwhile, finest of chariot-heroes,
anger-inflamed Droṇa
proceeded at a leisurely speed
against the Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas.

31 Penetrating the ranks of the Pāṇḍavas,
Droṇa succeeded
in harassing and scattering
hundreds and thousands of their soldiers.

32 Mahārāja, announcing his name
on the battlefield,
Droṇa spread panic among the Pāṇḍavas,
Pāñcālas and Matsyas.

33 To stem the fierce offensive
of Bharadvāja's son,
the Pāñcāla prince Vīraketu launched
a counter-attack.

34 With five depressed-knot arrows
he wounded Droṇa,
with one he sliced his flag,
with seven wounded his charioteer.

35 Mahārāja, I saw a wonderful sight –
however hard he tried,
Droṇa was unable to proceed
against the Pāñcāla prince.

36 O gracious monarch, seeing Droṇa contained,
the Pāñcālas encircled him;
they were eager, O rājā, to gain victory
for Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira.

37 Theu, O rājā, they poured a deluge
of fiery darts,
and expensive *tomaras*, and all manner
of other weapons.

38 O rājā! Droṇa blocked them all
with his counter-weapons,
like the wind dispersing rain-clouds –
an enchanting spectacle!

39 Slayer-of-hostile-heroes Droṇa
shot a mahā-terrifying shaft,
a sun-and-fire-dazzling weapon,
at Vīraketu's chariot.

40 O rājā, that shaft sliced through
the body of the Pāñcāla
and, dripping blood and spitting fire,
slid into the earth.

41 And the joy of the Pāñcāla dynasty
toppled from his chariot,
like a mahā-champak tree uprooted
down a hill by a storm.

42 No sooner had the rājā's son
been killed
than the Pāñcālas swiftly
encircled Droṇa.

43 O Bharata, Citraketu, Sudhanva, Citravarma
and Citraratha
grieved the loss
of their illustrious brother Vīraketu.

44 United and determined,
they rushed on Bharadvāja's son,
shooting arrows like clouds at summer-end
disgorging rain.

45 Wounded by the mahā-chariot-hero
royal brothers,
bull-brave twice-born Droṇa, infuriated,
decided to kill them.

46 He enveloped them
in a massive arrow-net.
They reeled, wounded by arrows
shot from ear-taut position.

47 O excellent rājā, they wondered:
*What do we do?*
Taking advantage of their confusion,
Droṇa, pleased, O Bharata,

48 And angry too, deprived them
of their chariots, charioteers and horses.
Then, with *bhalla*-arrows,
the illustrious hero

49 Sliced off their heads, as if snipping
a bunch of flowers.
O rājā, the shining heroes tumbled
from their chariots

50 Like Daityas and Dānavas slaughtered
in the god-anti-god war,
in the distant past. O rājā!
After killing them, valiant Bhāradvāja-

51 Droṇa waved
his invincible gold-worked bow,
which dazzled like lightning flashing
in masses of clouds.

52 Seeing the god-like mahā-chariot-heroes,
the Pāñcālas, exterminated,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna was plunged
in deep grief.
Tears trickled down his cheeks.
Burning with anger,
he drove swiftly across the field
at Droṇa's chariot.

53 O king, suddenly there were cries
of "Hai! Hai!"
for Droṇa was obscured by the arrows
of Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

54 Though hemmed in
by mahātmā Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Droṇa remained unmoved;
in fact, he smiled.

55 Mahārāja, the prince of the Pāñcālas,
bursting with anger,
shot ninety depressed-knot arrows
at Droṇa's chest.

56 Grievously wounded
by the illustrious hero Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
famed Droṇa slumped in his chariot-box,
half-unconscious.

57 Seeing him disabled,
valour-and-victory-renowned Dhṛṣṭadyumna
threw away his bow
and swiftly unsheathed his sword.



58 O gracious monarch! The mahā-chariot-hero
jumped from his chariot
and quickly leapt inside the chariot
of the son of Bharadvāja.

59 His eyes were red with wrath.
His one aim was to behead Droṇa.
But Droṇa, recovering,
picked up his bow.

60 Seeing Dhṛṣṭadyumna's intention,
he shot close-range *vaitistika*-arrows
at Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
wounding him in the chest.

61 The battle with mahā-chariot-hero
Dhṛṣṭadyumna continued.
The secret of the close-quarter
*vaitiśtika*-arrows

62 By which, O rājā, he repulsed Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
was known only to Droṇa.
Enfeebled by those arrows,
mahā-powerful Dhṛṣṭadyumna

63 Jumped down from Droṇa's chariot.
His energy was sapped.
He climbed back into his chariot
and, lifting his massive bow,

64 The mahā-chariot-hero Dhṛṣṭadyumna
resumed his attack on Droṇa
who, mahārāja, retaliated
with countless arrows.

65 A marvellous battle resulted between Droṇa
and the Pāñcāla,
like that between Śakra-Indra and Prahlāda
for lordship of the three worlds.

66 Both were experts
in multiple war-techniques:
they swerved in maṇḍalas
across the battlefield;
they performed the *yamaka*
and other manoeuvres;
they riddled each other
with showers of arrows.

67 Dazzling and bewildering the soldiers
who watched them,
they drenched each other with arrows
like clouds pouring rain.

68 The two mahā-ātmaned heroes obscured
the sky, the four quarters
and the earth with arrows. All creatures watched
and offered them pūjā-respect.

69 So did the Kṣatriyas, mahārāja,
and other soldiers.
"Clashing with Dhṛṣṭadyumna in battle,
Droṇa will certainly

70 Lose." Saying this, O rājā,
all the Pāñcālas exulted.
In the battle, swiftly, Droṇa aimed
at Dhṛṣṭadyumna's charioteer's

71 Head, and sliced it like ripe fruit
off a tree.
Immediately, O rājā, Dhṛṣṭadyumna's horses
ran amok.

72 And no sooner had mahā-ātmaned Dhṛṣṭadyumna's
horses run wild
than illustrious Droṇa recommenced his feats
on the battlefield,
traversing the area and killing the Pāñcālas
and Sṛñjayas.

73 Defeating the Pāṇḍavas and the Pāñcālas,
the famed son of Bharadvaja
re-grouped his ranks
and stood as their leader.
O *prabhu*-lord! The Pāṇḍavas despaired
of defeating him.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-THREE

Sañjaya continued:

1 O rājā! Duḥśāsana continued to attack
the grandson of Śini,
showering him with arrows,
like rain from a rain-cloud.

2 With sixty arrows he wounded Sātyaki;
then with sixteen;
but Sātyaki remained firm
like the Maināka mountain.

3 Valiant Duḥśāsana encircled Sātyaki
with a formidable force
of chariot-heroes from different lands –
all shooting arrows

4 Which, O finest of the Bharatas,
reverberated like thunder
across the ten sky-points,
when Parjanya sends down rain.

5 Seeing the Kaurava Duḥśāsana
marching against him,
maha-powerful Satyaki obscured him
with an arrow-volley.

6 Harassed by that volley,
the soldiers led by Duḥśāsana
panicked and fled
in front of his very eyes.

7 O Indra-among-rājās! Nevertheless,
your son Duḥśāsana
remained fearless, and counter-attacked
the force of Sātyaki.

8 He wounded Sātyaki's horses
with four arrows;
his charioteer with three; and, roaring,
Sātyaki with a hundred.

9 Mahārāja, the Madhu-descendant Sātyaki,
inflamed with anger,
made invisible, with his arrows,
Duḥśāsana's chariot, charioteer and flag.

10 Not only that – he trapped Duḥśāsana
with his arrows,
like a spider entangling a fly
in its web.

11 Foe-subduing Sātyaki performed this feat
as if effortlessly.
Seeing Duḥśāsana enfeebled in this way,
rājā Duryodhana

12 Ordered the Trigartas to attack
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki's chariot.
The approached Yuyudhana-Sātyaki –
the cruel-deed-perpetrating,

13 Battle-experienced Trigarta warriors,
three thousand of them.
They encircled him
with their huge force of chariots.

14 They had taken fierce vows to fight
to the death.
They rushed into battle
shooting arrows in swarms.

15 Sātyaki killed five hundred warriors
heading their ranks.
They fell, slaughtered
by the finest of the Śinis –

16 Like trees crashing on a mountain slope
in a mahā-storm.
Lord of the world! Mutilated elephants,
shredded war-flags,

17 Gold-harnessed corpses
lay on the field,
rolling in blood, ripped apart
by Sātyakī's arrows –

18 As lovely, mahārāja, as crimson flowers
draping *kiṁśuka* trees.
All those soldiers of yours,
killed by Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,

19 Had no one to save them. They died,
like elephants swallowed in a swamp.
The other arrows sped
to Droṇa's chariot

20 Like mahā-snakes slithering into holes,
fearing the bird-rājā Garuda.
Killing five hundred warriors
with his venomous snake-arrows,

21 Valiant Sātyaki slowly drove
to the chariot of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
Your son Duḥśāsana
saw the excellent warrior

22 Sātyaki advancing, and wounded him
with nine depressed-knot arrows.
Sātyaki replied
with five sharp arrows,

23 Straight-flying shafts, fitted with gold,
and vulture-winged.
Mahārāja, royal Bharata!
Duḥśāsana smiled, and Sātyaki

24 Was wounded with first three
and then five arrows.
Śini's grandson wounded your son
with five arrows,

25 Which also sliced his bow.
Smiling, he sped towards Arjuna.
Duḥśāsana, furious, eager to kill
the valiant Vṛṣṇi,

26 Flung an all-piercing *śakti*-spear
at Sātyaki
That terrifying *śakti*-spear hurled
by your son,

27 O rājā, was sliced by Sātyaki
with *kaṅka*-feathered arrows.
O ruler of men,
your son picked up another bow,

28 Wounded Sātyaki with arrows,
and screamed his war-cry.
This angered Sātyaki.
Casting a spell on your son,

29 He shot three fire-tongued arrows
at his chest;
with eight more iron-tipped arrows
he wounded Duḥśāsana.

30 Duḥśāsana retaliated
with twenty excellent shafts.
Mahārāja, the Sātvata hero,
in his turn.

31 Damaged Duḥśāsana's chariot
with three depressed-knot arrows.
The enraged mahā-chariot-hero- killed
Duḥśāsana's horses

32 With sharp arrows, and his charioteer
with depressed-knot ones.
Bow with one *bhalla*-shaft,
gloves with five,

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33 Flag and chariot-axle with two each –
all-weapons-skilled Sātyaki
destroyed these; with two more he killed
two flank-guards.

34 Unchârioted, his bow disintegrated,
his charioteer and horses killed,
Duḥśāsana was sped to safety
in the Trigarta general's chariot.

35 O Bharata descendant!
The mahā-muscled Śini Sātyaki
briefly gave chase
to fleeing Duḥśāsana.
Then, remembering Bhīma's words,
he let him escape.

36 In the middle of the sabhā,
O Bharata descendant,
Bhīma had vowed
to kill your sons.

37 O *prabhu*-lord! O rājā!
That is why Sātyaki,
after vanquishing Duḥśāsana,
sped swiftly to Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FOUR

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:

1 "Was there not one mahā-chariot-hero
in my entire army
to stop or kill Sātyaki
as he advanced inexorably?

2 Incredibly brave
and as powerful as Śakra-Indra himself,
single-handed he did wonders,
like Indra among the Dānavas.

3 Perhaps the trail he followed
was unguarded; perhaps
all the soldiers guarding it
had earlier been killed.

4 Sañjaya, the feats you praise as performed
by the Vṛṣṇi hero
excel even the feats performed
by Śakra-Indra.

5 I cannot even imagine them – the feats
of the mahā-ātmaned Vṛṣṇi-Andhaka hero.
Unbelievable!
Hearing of them pains me.

6 If, as you say, Sañjaya, one man
routed my whole army,
I might as well assume
my sons will not survive.

7 Tell me, Sañjaya, how was Śini's grandson
single-handed
able to defeat my large army,
dedicatedly pitted against him?"

Sañjaya continued:

8 O rājā, the noise of your chariots,
elephants, horses and foot-soldiers
resembled the cacophony
at the end of a yuga.

9 O honour-bestower, so many reinforcements
adding to your army
made a host so huge – no other army
could equal it, I thought.

10 The gods and Cāraṇas
who came there marvelled,
saying, "Never will the earth see
the equal of this."

11 O lord of the world!
The force assembled by Droṇa
to save Jayadratha from death
was without equal.

12 The noise made by the battle-ready
opposing armies
resembled the roaring
of a tempest-tossed ocean.

13 O finest of men! Hundreds of thousands
of earth-rulers' soldiers
joined the ranks
of the Pāṇḍava forces.

14 As they prepared for battle,
the din they created
was dreadful and deafening –
indeed, a horripilating tumult.

15 The horrendous roaring of war-cries
of the Pāṇḍava
and Kaurava armies
reverberated hundreds of times.

16 O Bharata, everywhere could be heard
the beating of drums,
the twanging of bowstrings,
and the war-cries of soldiers.

17 Then Bhīma, Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Nakula,
Sahadeva, and Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
O gracious monarch,
said to their troops;

18 "Heroes!
Arise!
Attack!
Attack swiftly!
The Madhu scion
and the son of Pāṇḍu
have penetrated
the enemy ranks!

19 Make easy for them
the killing of Jayadratha!"
With these words
they inspired their soldiers.

20 "If those two are killed, the Kauravas
will achieve their goal.
We will lose.
Unite, therefore, and fight!

21 Confuse this army, like a mahā-tempest
churning the ocean!"
O rājā, stirred by the Pāñcāla prince
and Bhīma,

22 Forgetting their own safety,
they began slaughtering the Kauravas.
Desiring to die in battle,
these supremely energetic heroes

23 Hoped to attain heaven by laying down
their lives for their friends.
Your troops too, O rājā,
seeking fame,

24 Determined to fight,
stood firm on the battlefield.
In that fearful carnage
that ravaged the field,

25 Sātyaki, routing his foes, kept advancing
to join Arjuna.
Blinded by the dazzle
of sun-reflecting coats-of-mail,

26 The soldiers turned their faces away
to protect their eyes.
Though the mahā-ātmaned Pāṇḍavas
struggled hard to advance,

27 Mahārāja, your son Duryodhana
penetrated their ranks.
O Bharata, a fierce clash took place
between the two,

28 Involving the slaughter
of countless brave soldiers.
"While the soldiers fled in the carnage,"
(Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked)

29 "Did my son Duryodhana, O charioteer,
turn his back too?
So many warriors ranged against
a lone Duryodhana –

30 A royal lord of men –
I think it most unjust.
Given every comfort, Lakṣmī's husband,
everyone's lord –

31 One man facing so many –
did he turn away his face?"
Sañjaya replied: O Bharata, rājā,
your son, fighting, amazing,

32 Alone against many, on the battlefield –
let me explain . . .
The Pāṇḍavas were trampled by Duryodhana
on the battlefield

33 Like a cluster of lotuses crushed
by an elephant.
O king, witnessing the destruction of their troops
by your soon,

34 The Pāñcālas, led by Bhīma,
counter-attacked.
Your son wounded Pāṇḍava Bhīma
with ten arrows,

35 The twins with three each,
and Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira with seven;
Virāṭa and Drupada with six,
Śikhaṇḍin with a hundred;

36 Dhṛṣṭadyumna with twenty,
Draupadī's sons with three each.
Scattering hundreds of soldiers,
elephants and chariots

37 With his arrows, he wreaked havoc
like the god of death Antaka.
He pulled his bow tight
in a full maṇḍala-circle.

38 Such was his bow-skill that none
could divine his technique.
His enemies always saw
his massive gold-worked bow

39 Pulled, as it were,
in a full maṇḍala-circle.
With two *bhallas*
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira sliced the bow

40 Of your son, who was battling
for victory.
With ten excellent arrows,
he grievously wounded your son.

41 They pierced his armour
and slid into the ground.
Delighted, the sons of Pṛthā-Kuntī
surrounded Yudhiṣṭhira,

42 Like the gods and mahā-ṛṣis
who surrounded Śakra-Indra
after he killed Vṛtra. Stringing another bow,
your valiant son

43 Shouted "Wait!"
and rushed at rājā Yudhiṣṭhira.
Seeing your son attacking
with redoubled fury,

44 The victory-seeking Pāñcālas
prepared to repulse him.
To capture the Pāṇḍava,
Droṇa faced them head on,

45 Like a mountain facing
tempest-driven rainclouds.
O rājā, what followed
was a horripilating clash –

46 A gory battle between your army
and the Pāṇḍavas,
O mahā-muscled one!
The whole place became, as it were,
the playground of all-creatures-consuming
Rudra-Śiva.

47 There emanated a roaring noise
from the place
where Dhanañjaya-Arjuna was.
*Prabhu*-lord, the clamour
exceeded all other cacophonies.
It was horripilating.

48 O mahā-muscled one!
The battle between Arjuna
and your troops resumed,
between Sātyaki and your bowmen.

49 Ruler of the earth!
In that horrendous clash,
Droṇa and his enemies fought
at the front
of the battle-formation.
All of them –
Arjuna, Droṇa, mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki –
flamed with fury.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE

1 Mahāraja (continued Sañjaya), that afternoon
a mahā rain-cloud-roaring battle
took place between Droṇa
and the Somakas.

2 Most-valiant-of-men,
red-horse-chariot-driven Droṇa,
eager for battle, drove against the Pāṇḍavas
at medium speed.

3 Mahā-powerful, jar-born, your well-wisher, O rājā,
the mahā-archer Droṇa
shot multi-feathered shafts at the Somakas,
Sṛñjayas and Kekayas.

4 O Bharata, rājā, it seemed as if
he selected his victims
from the finest warriors,
as if in sport.

5 The mahā-chariot-hero of the Kekayas,
Bṛhatkṣatra,
the eldest of the five Kekaya brothers,
attacked him.

6 Shooting sharp arrows continuously,
they harassed the ācārya,
like a cloud-mass pelting rain
on Gandhamādana mountain.

7 Mahārāja, Droṇa retaliated angrily
with fifteen
stone-sharpened arrows,
fitted with golden wings.

8 Smiling, with five arrows
Bṛhatkṣatra neutralised
each of the arrows
that hissed like venomous snakes.

9 Seeing his wornderful dexterity,
Droṇa, finest of the twice-born,
smiled, and shot eight depressed-knot arrows
at him.

10 Seeing the arrows of Droṇa
whistling swiftly towards him,
Bṛhatkṣatra neutralised them
with a counter-volley.

11 Mahārāja, your soldiers marvelled
as they stood
witnessing Bṛhatkṣatra perform
that difficult feat.

12 And Droṇa praised Bṛhatkṣatra too.
Then, mahārāja,
Droṇa invoked the invincible divine
Brāhma-weapon.

13 Seeing the weapon shot by Droṇa,
the Kekaya prince,
O Indra among rājās,
neutralised it with his Brāhma-weapon.

14 With the Brahmāstra neutralised,
Bṛhatkṣatra wounded Droṇa the Brahmin
with sixty stone-whetted,
gold-winged arrows.

15 Finest-among-men Droṇa
shot *nārāca*-arrows at him;
piercing his armour,
they plunged in the earth.

16 O finest of kings!
Like black slough-freed snakes
entering anthills, they pierced the Kekayas
and entered the earth.

17 Mahārāja, wounded by Droṇa's arrows,
the Kekaya prince
was roused to anger
and began rolling his lovely eyes.

18 With seventy stone-sharpened,
gold winged arrows
he wounded Droṇa, and Droṇa's charioteer
with a single shaft.

19 O gracious monarch! Though wounded
by the arrows of Bṛhatkṣatra,
Droṇa shot five arrows
at his chariot.

20 Confusing the mahā-chariot-hero
Bṛhatkṣatra,
Droṇa killed his four horses
with four arrows.

21 From his chariot-seat, with one arrow,
he killed the charioteer.
Two more arrows sliced the flagpole
and the umbrella.

22 Then the bull-among-the-twice-born,
with a perfectly aimed *nārāca,*
hit Bṛhatkṣatra's chest.
His chest split, he fell.

23 O rājā, seeing the mahā-chariot-hero
Bṛhatkṣatra killed,
Śiśupāla's son Dhṛṣṭaketu, angered,
said to his charioteer:

24 "Charioteer, drive me to the spot
where armour-clad Droṇa stands,
slaughtering the Kekayas
and Pāñcālas."

25 Hearing these words
of the finest of chariot-heroes,
the charioteer drove the swift Kāmboja horses
to Droṇa.

26 The lord of the Cedis, Dhṛṣṭaketu,
incredibly powerful,
rushed, like a fly into a flame,
to slaughter Droṇa.

27 With sixty arrows he struck Droṇa,
his horses chariot and flag.
With more arrows he provoked
the sleeping tiger.

28 With a vulture-feathered, razor-tipped arrow,
Droṇa
sliced in half the bow
of his valiant adversary.

29 Śiśupāla's son, a mahā-chariot-hero,
strung another bow
and wounded Droṇa
with peacock-and-*kaṅka*-feathered arrows.

30 Droṇa only smiled, and with four arrows
he killed
Dhṛṣṭaketu's four steeds, and decapitated
his charioteer.

31 He wounded Dhṛṣṭaketu as well
with twenty-five arrows.
Leaping off his chariot, the Cedi prince
brandished a mace

32 And, like an enraged she-snake,
hurled it at Bharadvāja's son.
Heavy, steel-crafted, gold-inlaid,
like Kāla's doomsday-night

33 Seeing that mace whirling towards him,
Bharadvāja's son
disintegrated it
with thousands of whetted arrows.

34 Splintered by the arrows
of the son of Bharadvāja,
the mace, O Kaurava world-lord,
crashed on the earth.

35 Seeing his mace-attack frustrated,
brave and angry Dhṛṣṭaketu
hurled a lance
and a flaming gold-inladi *śakti.*

36 Slicing the lance with five, and the *śakti*
with five more arrows,
Droṇa saw them fall the two snakes
mangled by Garuḍa.

37 Determined to kill Dhṛṣṭaketu,
the valiant son of Bharadvāja
shot an arrow
at Dhṛṣṭaketu –

38 An arrow which pierced his breast-plate.
bored through his chest,
like a swan plunging in a lotus-lake,
and entered the earth.

39 Like a kingfisher swooping on
and gulping an insect,
Droṇa with his arrows, in the mahā-battle,
devoured Dhṛṣṭaketu.

40 With the Cedi-rājā killed in this manner,
his infuriated son,
skilled in all weapons, decided to take
his father's place.

41 Droṇa only smiled,
and sent him to Yama's abode
with his arrows, like a voracious tiger killing
a yearling in a forest.

42 O Bharata! While the Pāṇḍavas
were getting decimated,
Jarāsaṁdha's brave son Sahadeva
attacked Droṇa.

43 Like clouds shrouding the sun,
mahā-muscled Sahadeva
shot arrow-showers that made Droṇa
no longer visible.

44 Impressed by the wonderful dexterity
of his bow-craft,
Kṣatriya-crushing Droṇa
shot hundreds of thousands of arrows.

45 Shrouding that excellent chariot-hero
and his chariot
in front of his archers,
Droṇa swiftly killed Jarāsaṁdha's son.

46 Droṇa exterminated whoever and whatever
confronted him.
He was like Antaka-Kāla,
consuming all.

47 Mahārāja, shouting his name
on the battlefield,
Droṇa attacked the Pāṇḍavas
with hundreds of arrows.

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48 His stone-sharpened arrows,
with his name engraved on each,
killed men, elephants and horses
in hundreds.

49 Like mahā-anti-gods
killed by Śakra-Indra;
like cows shivering in winter,
they were harassed by Droṇa.

50 O bull-brave Bharata!
While this Pāṇḍava-slaughter continued,
agonising wails arose
from Droṇa's victims.

51 Scorched by the fierce sun
and punished by Droṇa's arrows,
the Pāñcālas were completely confused
and frightened.

52 Trapped in the arrow-net
created by Bharadvāja's son,
the Pāñcāles felt as if their thighs
were paralysed.

53 But soon, mahārāja,
the Cedis, Sṛñjayas, Kāśis
and Kosalas eagerly rushed to fight
Bharadvāja's son.

54 Shouting "Kill Droṇa! Kill Droṇa!"
the Cedi,
Pāñcāla and Sṛñjaya warriors
attacked Droṇa.

55 Those tigers-among-men concentrated
all their powers
to despatch mahā-energetic Droṇa
to Yama's abode.

56 But even as they tried so hard,
Bharadvāja's son's arrows
despatched many Cedi leaders
to Yama's abode.

57 The ranks of Cedi leaders getting reduced,
the Pāñcālas trembled
under the onslaught
of Droṇa's arrows.

58 O Bharata! O gracious monarch!
Seeing Droṇa's feats,
they started shouting, "O Bhīma!
O Dhṛṣṭadyumna!"

59 They said: "The Brahmin has surely
performed strict tapasyā
which makes him angrily wipe out
Kṣatriya bulls-among-men.

60 To fight is a Kṣatriya's dharma.
To do tapasyā is a Brahmin's.
This Brahmin
has done tapasyā
and achieved war-skills.
His glance alone can consume foes."

61 O Bharata! Countless excellent Kṣatriya
bulls-among-men
in this battle have entered
the weapons-burning-fire of Droṇa,
and have been consumed
in that conflagration.

62 With his strength, his enterprise and determination,
mahā-radiant Droṇa
is stupefying and exterminating
our soldiers."

63 Hearing these words,
Kṣatradharma stepped forward.
With a half-moon arrow
mahā-powerful Kṣatradharma sliced,

64 Angrily,
Droṇa's already fully nocked bow.
Kṣatriya-crushing Droṇa,
roused to intense fury,

65 Fitted another bow,
a radiant, hugely powerful weapon,
and stringing a fatal-to-foes
sharp arrow,

66 The mighty ācārya pulled it back
ear-tight –
and fired. Kṣatradharma fell dead
on the ground.

67 His heart ripped open,
he toppled from his vehicle.
Fear gripped the soldiers with the death
of Dhṛṣṭadyumna's son.

68 Next, mahā-powerful Cekitāna
faced Droṇa.
With ten arrows he lacerated
Droṇa's chest.

69 With four he wounded Droṇa's charioteer;
with another four, his horses.
With sixteen shafts
the ācārya wounded his arms.

70 With seven he shredded the war-flag,
with three killed the charioteer.
Driver dead,
the horses ran wild.

71 Seeing the wild-horsed and driver-less
chariot of Cekitāna,
rendered so, O gracious monarch,
by Droṇa's arrows,

72 The Cedis, Pāñcālas and Sṛñjayas,
O gracious monarch,
panicked. Routing them,
Droṇa looked resplendent.

73 Ear-long white hair,
*śyāma*-dark the complexion,
eighty-five years old,
Droṇa moved like a boy of sixteen.

74 Mahārāja, as Droṇa drove around
on the battlefield, fearlessly,
he looked
like thunderbolt-hurling Indra.

75 O king! Mahā-muscled and wise Drupada
then said:
"He kills Kṣatriyas like a voracious tiger
killing delicate deer.

76 Ill-thinking, wicked-minded Duryodhana
will go to a horrible world
after death,
for it is his greed
that has led to the deaths
of these bulls-among-men Kṣatriyas
sprawled
on the battlefield.

77 Hundreds of warriors litter the field
like so many bloodied cows and bulls –
so much meat for dogs
and jackals."

78 Mahārāja, as soon as he finished,
Drupada, commander of an *akṣauhiṇi,*
placing Kuntī's sons in front,
marched against Droṇa.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-SIX

Sañjaya continued:

1 When Droṇa began his destruction
of the Pāṇḍava ranks,
the Pāñcālas and Somakas retreated
to a safe distance.

2 O Bhārata, during the course
of that horripilating battle,
it seemed as if the gory period
of the end of a yuga had come.

3 Seeing Droṇa again and again
displaying his valour,
and shouting, and the Pāṇḍavas
and Pāñcālas decimated,

4 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira realised
there was none to protect him.
O Indra among rājās, he wondered:
*How will this end?*

5 He looked eagerly in all directions
for a glimpse of Arjuna
but saw no sign
of Arjuna or Sātyaki.

6 Seeing no sign
of the flag of tiger-brave Arjuna
with its enblem
of bull-among-forest-folk Hanumān,
and hearing no rumbling twang
of the Gāṇḍīva-bow,
his senses drooped,
he was lost in depression.

7 Also, not seeing
the most excellent of Vṛṣṇis, Sātyaki,
made feeble every organ
of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira's body.

8 No sign of finest-of-men Arjuna
and Sātyaki
sapped his peace of mind.
Mahā-minded Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
was very sensitive
to public blame.

9 Regarding the chariot of Śini's grandson
he began to think:
"On the battlefield, in the trail
of Phālguna-Arjuna,

10 I ordered the truth-speaking
grandson of Śini,
the remover of the fears
of his friends.
I feared for one then;
now I fear for two.

11 I must get news of Sātyaki
and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
Having ordered Sātyaki to follow
the trail of Arjuna,

12 Who shall I now order to follow
the Sātvata hero?
If I now try to get information
only about my brother,

13 Without thinking of Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
the world will blame me,
saying, 'Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
thinks only of his brother;

14 He has no feeling
for the truly renowned Vṛṣṇi, Sātyaki.'
I fear public blame. So I will send
wolf-waisted Bhīma

15 On the trail of the mahā-ātmaned
Mādhava, Sātyaki.
The love I have
for foe-crushing Arjuna

16 Is the same as the love I have
for heroic Sātyaki of the Vṛṣṇis.
I have sent the Śini hero
on a crucial mission.

17 On a friend's asking, and for personal glory,
mahā-powerful Sātyaki
has penetrated the Bharata ranks,
like a *makara* the ocean.

18 I can hear the tremendous clamour
of the clash
between wise Sātyaki
and the brave enemy warriors.

19 I have thought this over
very, very deeply.
Yes, the bow-expert son of Pāṇḍu,
Bhīma-sena,

20 Must go where the two mahā-chariot
heroes have gone.
There is nothing on this earth
that Bhīma cannot do.



21 His śakti is such that he can face
the world's bowmen.
With the strength of his arms,
he can rout all enemies.

22 With the help of the strength of his arms
this mahā-atmaned hero
has seen us safely through our exile,
never defeated even once.

23 If Bhīma now goes to rescue them,
the Sātvata Sātyaki
and Phālguna-Arjuna will have found
a perfect protector.

24 I should not worry for Phālguna-Arjuna
and the Sātvata Sātyaki.
They are all-arms-experts; they are protected
by Vāsudeva-Krishna.

25 But I must find a way to rid myself
of all anxiety.
That is why I must order Bhīma
on this mission.

26 When I have done this,
I will know Sātyaki is safe."
Making up his mind,
the son of Dharma, Yudhiṣṭhira,

27 The Pāṇḍava rājā, said to his charioteer,
  “Take me to Bhīma.”
Ordered by Dharmarāja, the charioteer,
  expert in horse-lore,

28 Drove the gold-ornamented chariot
  to where Bhīma was.
Arriving there, having made up his mind
  on what to do,

29 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira was nevertheless
  not very sure.
O ruler of the earth! Still confused,
  he called Bhīma;

30 Kuntī’s son Yudhiṣṭhira spoke
  to Bhīma:
“Who, in a single chariot, defeated gods,
  Gandharvas, Daityas –

31 I do not see any sign
  of your younger brother, Bhīma.”
Seeing Dharmarāja’s deep anxiety,
  Bhīma said to him:

32 “I have never seen you worried
  so deeply.
In the past, it was you who helped us
  in our sorrows.

33 O Indra among rājās! Stand up!
  Stand up!
Order me. Tell me what to do.
  O honour-bestower!
There is nothing in this world
  that I cannot do.

34 O finest of the Kuru dynasty!
  Order me.
Get rid this depression
  that has overtaken you.”
Tearfully, sighing like a black snake,
  Yudhiṣṭhira said

35 These sorrow-laden words
to his brother Bhīma:
"I can hear the blast
of the Pāñcajanya conch

36 Filled with the breath of angry,
illustrious Vāsudeva-Krishna
I fear my brother Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
has died today.

37 With Arjuṇa killed, Janārdana-Krishna
continues the battle.
That hero on whose great prowess
the Pāṇḍavas survive,

38 Who sees us through in fearful crises,
like the gods
saved by thousand-eyed Indra –
I am certain
that hero has penetrated
the ranks of the Bharatas
in search of the Sindhu ruler,
and is harassing them.

39 O Bhīma, we know he has gone,
but will he return?
*Śyāma*-dark-blue-complexioned,
*guḍākeśa*-curly-haired,
young, attractive to look at,
a mahā-chariot-hero,

40 Broad-chested, long-and-strong-armed,
walking with the grace and glory
of a musth elephant,
large eyes like those of a *cakora*-bird,
he instils terror
in his enemies.

41 Arjuna has come from the world
of Śakra-Indra
for my protection and prosperity.
He is devoted
to the service of the elderly,
he is patient,
he is grateful, he is firm
in his truthful vows.

42 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna has penetrated
the ranks
of the powerful enemy army.
As soon as
foe-crushing Arjuna
entered their ranks,

43 I ordered the Sātvata hero Sātyaki
to follow his trail.
O Bhīma, I know he has gone,
but he has not returned.

44 O mahā-muscled foe-destroying Bhīma!
May you prosper!
This is the cause of my grief.
It is because of Arjuna,
because of Sātyaki,
that I grieve.

45 When ghee is poured,
the sacrificial fire flares up.
So does my grief, when I fail to see
any sign of Arjuna.

46 Find out about the tiger-among-men
mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki
who went after your younger brother
Arjuna.

47 My anxiety is also because I see
no sign of strong-armed Sātyaki.
I am afraid
Pārtha-Arjuna has been killed,
and Sātyaki
is now battling.

48 He has no one to help him.
This only adds to my grief.
It could well be
he has been killed as well,
and war-expert Krishna
is now fighting.

49 Foe-chastiser, I am deeply troubled.
Kuntī's son,
go immediately and see
where Dhanañjaya-Arjuna

50 And mahā-heroic Sātyaki now are.
If you think
this is your duty, then do it,
O dharma-knower!

51 It is not so much Arjuna you must seek,
as Sātyaki.
O Pṛthā-Kuntī's son,
Sātyaki went after
Savyasācī-Arjuna to please me.
He chose
a dangerous mission
impossible for ordinary warriors.

52 Son of Pāṇḍu,
the instant you see
any sign of Krishna,
Arjuna and the Sātvata Sātyaki,
shout your leonine war-cry,
and inform me about them."

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-SEVEN

1 "What cause have Krishna and Arjuna
to fear?" said Bhīma.
"They ride the chariot of Brahmā, Śiva,
Indra and Varuṇa.

2 But I will go, humbly placing your order
on my head.
Do not fear. I will let you know about
those tigers-among-men."

3 Saying this (Sañjaya continued),
mighty Bhīma prepared to leave,
requesting Dhṛṣṭadyumna and others
to protect Yudhiṣṭhira.

4 Mahā-powerful Bhīma said
to Dhṛṣṭadyumna:
"Mahā-armed one, you know Droṇa is
a mahā-chariot-hero.

5 He is eager to make Dharmarāja
Yudhiṣṭhira captive.
Son of Pṛṣata, more important
than my going there

6 Is the crucial duty of protecting
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira.
But he has commanded me –
and I cannot refuse him.

7 So I will go where the doomed
ruler of Sindhu, Jayadratha, is.
In my absence,
protect Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

8 I follow the trail of my brother
and wise Sātyaki.
I will faithfully carry out the orders
of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

9 Your most important duty
is to protect him."
Mahārāja, Dhṛṣṭadyumna replied
to wolf-waisted Bhīma:

10 "Pṛthā's son, go. Rest assured
I will do what you say.
Without killing Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Droṇa

11 Will never succeed in capturing
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira."
Making Dhṛṣṭadyumna responsible
for the safety of the rājā,

12 Bhīma paid his respects
to his elder brother,
and prepared to go in search
of Phālguna-Arjuna.
Then, O descendant of Bharata,
Dharmarāja
warmly embraced Bhīma,
the son of Kuntī,

13 Affectionately smelt
the crown of his head,
and blessed him. Doing *pradakṣiṇa*
before pleased Brahmins,

14 He touched
the eight auspicious items:
fire
cow
*dūrva*-grass
cow-bile
ghee
unhusked rice
gold
curd –
he drank *kairātaka*-honey.
His eyes
became red with headiness
His strength
increased two-fold.

15 The twice-born Brahmins intoned
auspicious chants
for his victory. He rejoiced in a foretaste
of victory.

16 Auspicious breezes blew,
heralding his success.
Mahā-armed Bhīma, armour-clad,
lovely-ear-ringed,

17 Armlet-adorned, hands protected
by leather gloves,
mounted his chariot. His steel armour,
carved with gold,

18 Was resplendently beautiful,
like a lightning-streaked cloud.
Dressed in yellow, red,
white and black attire,

19 Wearing a neck-protector, he looked
like a rainbow-drenched cloud.
As Bhīma prepared
to fight your army,

20 O lord of the world,
the blare of the Pāñcajanya was heard.
Hearing that three-worlds-
terror-filling din,

21 Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira again said
to mahā-armed Bhīma:
"Listen to the water-born conch
blown by the Vṛṣṇi Krishna,

22 The rājā of conches reverberating
through earth and inter-space!
Savyasācī-Arjuna must surely be
in great peril

23 For *cakra*-and-mace-wielding Krishna
to fight all the Kauravas.
Kuntī must be seeing
inauspicious omens;

24 So must Draupadī and Subhadrā
and all their friends.
Bhīma, rush immediately
to where Dhanañjaya-Arjuna is.

25 All the ten directions are blurred
to my eyes
because I cannot see Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
and the Sātvata Sātyaki."

26 "Go! Go!" Repeatedly the elder brother
urged wolf-waisted Bhīma.
And so, O rājā, illustrious Bhīma,
Pāṇḍu's son,

27 Slipped the leather gloves on his fingers,
and lifted his bow.
Prodded by his elder brother,
Bhīma, who loved his brothers,

28 Ordered the beating of war-drums.
He blew his conch loudly,
shouted war-cries,
and twanged his bow.

29 That deafening noise
made his enemies' hearts sink.
He charged upon his foes,
like a fearful apparition.

30 Swift, obedient, highest-pedigreed horses,
neighing loudly,
carried him. Wind-fleet, mind-fleet,
they were driven by Viśoka.

31 Drawing and rubbing and tightening
his bow-string,
Pṛthā-Kuntī's son started crushing
his enemies' vanguard.

32 Following the mahā-armed Bhīma
were the heroic Pāñcālas and Somakas,
like the hosts of gods
following Indra.

33 Mahārāja, surrounding him
as he marched forward
were your sons: Duḥśala, Citrasena,
Kuṇḍabhedi, Viviṁśati;

34 Durmukha, Duḥsaha,
Vikarṇa, Śala,
Vinda, Anuvinda, Sumukha,
Dīrghabāhu, Sudarśana,

35 Vṛndāraka, Suhasta,
Suṣeṇa, Dirghalocana,
Abhaya, Raudrakarma,
Suvarma, Durvimocana.

36 They looked resplendent,
these finest of mahā-chariot-heroes,
as they and their soldiers swooped
upon Bhīma.

37 The valiant mahā-chariot-hero Bhīma
was encircled by them.
Seeing them, the son of Kuntī,
illustrious Bhīma,
fell upon them like a lion
on lowly deer.

38 Brandishing their divine mahā-weapons,
those heroes
released a shower of arrows
on Bhīma,
shrouding him like clouds shrouding
the sun.

39 But Bhīma sliced through their ranks
and attacked Droṇa,
harassing with arrows
the front-line elephant division.

40 Bhīma, son of the wind-god Pavana,
scattered the elephants
in all directions with his arrows –
in no time at all.

41 Like forest-creatures scattering in fear
at the roar
of a *śarabha*, the elephants fled,
screaming in pain.

42 After that attack,
he targeted Droṇa's army,
but Droṇa blocked him,
like the shore the ocean.

43 Smiling, Droṇa shot a *nārāca*-shaft
that grazed Bhīma's forehead
Bhīma shone
like the risen sun.

44 Ācārya Droṇa, assuming that Bhīma,
like Phālguna-Arjuna,
would offer him pūjā-respect,
said to the wolf-waisted hero:

45 "Bhīma, you will never be able
to pierce our ranks
without first defeating me, your foe,
O mahā-powerful one.

46 Your younger brother pierced our ranks
because I permitted it.
But I will never allow you
to do so."

47 Hearing these words of the guru,
Bhīma angrily,
his eyes copper-red with fury,
said to him:

48 "Brahmin! Arjuna did not enter
with your permission.
He is invincible. He can pierce
even Śakra-Indra's army.

49 True, he hnoured you by offering
you his pūjā-respect.
But I am not gentle Arjuna, O Droṇa.
I am your enemy Bhīmasena.

50 You are like a father to us,
our guru, a friend.
We looked upon ourselves
as your sons.
We stood before you always
with deep respect.

51 But from what you have said today,
it seems
all that has changed.
If you feel today
that you are our enemy,
then so be it.

52 I am Bhīma, and I will treat you
as an enemy."
Bhīma lifted his mace,
like the rod of Kāla-Antaka-doom.

53 O rājā, he whirled and hurled it
at Droṇa,
but Droṇa quickly jumped down
from his chariot.
It smashed the chariot, charioteer,
horses and war-flag.

54 Bhīma massacred innumerable warriors,
like a storm felling trees.
Once more your sons
surrounded him.

55 But finest-of-valiant-warriors Droṇa
climbed into another chariot
and placed himself for battle
in front of the army ranks

56 Mahārāja,
incredibly valiant Bhīma-sena
was roused to a fury of anger
and he released
a continuous shower of arrows
on the stationary chariots.

57 Wounded in that attack,
your mahā-chariot-hero sons
struggled desperately,
inspired by hopes of victory.

58 Intent on killing Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma,
angry Duḥśāsana
fired a sharp, all-steel chariot-*śakti*
at Bhīma.

59 As the mahā-*śakti* hurled by your son
sped towards Bhīma,
he split it in two in mid-air.
A wonderful sight!

60 Brave Bhīma, with three sharp arrows,
killed Kuṇḍabhedi,
Suṣeṇa and Dirghanetra
(also known as Dīrghalocana).

61 Despite the opposition
of your supremely valiant sons,
he next killed Vṛdaraka,
the enhancer of Kuru glory.

62 Mahārāja, with three more arrows
Bhīma killed
three more sons:
Abhaya, Raudrakarma and Durvimocana.

63 Mahārāja, despite the fierce onslaught
by mighty Bhīma,
your sons again succeeded in encircling
puissant Bhīma.

64 Like clouds drenching a mountain
in the monsoon,
they showered their arrow-volleys
on magnificent Bhīma.

65 Like a mountain calmly absorbing
a stone avalanche,
Pāṇḍu's son remained unaffected
by the arrow-volley.

66 Smiling, he shot arrows that sent
Vinda and Anuvinda
as well as Suvarma
to the abode of Yama.

67 O bull-brave Bharata!
He targeted next
your brave son Sudarśana,
who toppled and died.

68 In no time at all,
casting his eyes in all directions,
Bhīma shot arrows that decimated
the chariot division.

69 O lord of the world!
Terrified like a herd of deer
by the din of Bhīma's chariot,
your sons lost all hope.

70 They panicked in fear,
and fled in all directions.
Kuntī's son Bhīma pursued them
a long distance.

71 O rājā, he harassed the Kauravas
in every way possible.
Persecuted by Bhīma, mahārāja,
your soldiers fled

72 On horses neighing fearfully,
leaving Bhīma far behind.
Routing them in battle,
mahā-powerful Bhīma,

73 Pāṇḍu's son, screamed his war-cry
like a lion
and slapped his arms.
Mahā-powerful Bhīma's arm-slapping

74 Spread terror, and he killed
the chariot-heroes one by one.
Slicing his way
through their ranks,
he hurried to launch an attack
on Droṇa's forces.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-EIGHT

1 Pāṇḍava Bhīma sliced through (continued Sañjaya)
but Droṇa smiled;
the ācārya deluged Bhīma
with a shower of arrows.

2 Bhīma seemed to gulp in
that deluge of arrows;
then, confounding Droṇa with his valour-māyā,
he attacked.

3 Enthused by your sons, many kings,
all bowmen of unparalleled prowess,
swiftly attacked Bhīma
from all sides.

4 O descendent of the Bhārata dynasty!
Bhīma smiled
and, roaring like a lion,
brandished his mace
and hurled that foe-destroying weapon
at his enemies.

5 Mahārāja, that mace resembled
the thunderbolt
used by calm-ātmaned Indra
against his enemies.
It crushed your soldiers
with deadly force.

6 O rājā, it struck terror in the hearts
of your sons.
Burning-bright, it reverberated
all over the earth.

7 Seeing that swift-speeding incandescent
mace-missile
bearing down on them,
your soldiers fled, screaming.

8 O gracious monarch! Just the din
of the weapon's unbearable whizzing
made chariot-heroes topple
from their chariots.

9 Slaughtered by the mace of Bhīma,
your soldiers fell;
others fled, like deer fearfully –
fleeing a tiger.

10 Kuntī's son Bhīma vanquished
those hard-to-defeat soldiers,
swooping like Garuḍa,
lovely-feathered bird-king.

11 Mahārāja, seeing Bhīma exterminating
his army's ranks,
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa
advanced to confront him.

12 Blocking Bhīma
with a shower of arrows,
he screamed his lion-war-cry,
terrorising the Pāṇḍavas.

13 Mahārāja, that clash between Droṇa
and mahā-ātmaned Bhīma
resembled the clash
between gods and anti-gods.

14 The sharp arrows fired
by the bow of Droṇa
killed hundreds of thousands
of brave heroes.

15 Leaping from his chariot,
the angry son of Pāṇḍu,
eyes narrowed, on foot, O rājā,
attacked Droṇa.

16 Head held steady,
arms firmed for duel,
poised for swift attack
like Agni, god of fire,
or Garuḍa the bird-king,
Bhīma faced Droṇa.

17 Like a bull receiving calmly
the impact of heavy rain,
as if in sport,
a līlā,
tiger-among-men Bhīma absorbed
Droṇa's arrows.

18 O gracious monarch!
Though wounded by Droṇa,
mahā-powerful Bhīma pushed
and overturned Droṇa's chariot.

19 O rājā, violently flung
out of his chariot
by Bhīma, Droṇa climbed another chariot
and faced him.

20 Seeing the energy of guru Droṇa
flagging,
Bhīma again drove his chariot
to confront him,

21 And once again overturned
the chariot of Droṇa,
along with Droṇa. He overturned eight
chariots in lilā.

22 In an instant, however,
Droṇa found another chariot.
Your soldiers observed the feat
with amazement

23 O scion of the Kaurava dynasty!
In the meantime
Bhīma's charioteer drove up
in his chariot. Wonderful!

24 Bhīma climbed into his chariot.
Mahā-powerful Bhīma
recommenced his onslaught
against your son.

25 Like a storm felling trees,
like ocean-waves
bearing down on hills,
Bhīma recommenced
his systematic slaughter
of the warring Kṣatriyas.

26 Powerful Bhīma swooped on the forces
of Hṛdīka's son Kṛtavarman;
exterminating them,
he marched ahead.

27 Spreading panic among his enemies
by the noise
of his palm-strokes,
Bhīma routed them
as easily as a tiger mauls
cows and bulls.

28 Slicing through the ranks
of the Bhojas and Daradas,
and through the Mlecchas
expert in war-destructiveness,

29 Bhīma caught a glimpse
of the mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki,
and speedily drove
his chariot forward.

30 Mahārāja, eager to reach
near Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma sliced his way
through your warriors.

31 And he caught a glimpse
of mahā-chariot-hero Arjuna
battling to kill
the Sindhu rājā Jayadratha.

32 Mahārāja, the moment he saw him,
tiger-among-men Bhīma,
like a roaring cloud,
screamed his lion-war-cry.

33 O Kuru descendant!
Pārtha-Arjuna and Vāsudeva-Krishna
heard the piercing war-cry
of Bhīma.

34 Simultaneously they heard the cry.
Eager for a glimpse
of wolf-waisted Bhīma,
they repeatedly shouted their war-cries.

35 Mahārāja, like two snorting bulls
Pārtha-Arjuna and Mādhava-Krishna
advanced
to meet Bhīma.

36 Mahārāja, hearing the war-cries
of Bhīma and Phālguna-Arjuna,
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
was happy.

37 The rājā's grief vanished the instant
he heard the cries.
The powerful king foresaw
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's success.

38 Even as exultant Bhīma kept roaring
again and again,
the son of Dharma, Yudhiṣṭhira,
smiled;

39 Mahā-armed Yudhiṣṭhira
spoke these heartfelt words:
"Bhīma, you have kept your word
given to a guru-elder.
You have given me news
of Arjuna.

40 Son of Pāṇḍu,
no one who is your enemy
can hope to win in battle.
We are fortunate
that Savyasācī-Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
is alive.

41 We are fortunate
the famed-in-truth hero Sātyaki
is alive and well.
We are fortunate we can hear
the war-cries of Vāsudeva-Krishna
and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

42 Fortunate are we that he
who defeated Śakra-Indra,
he who gratified the god of fire –
Phālguna-Arjuna,
the slayer of enemies,
is alive and well.

43 Fortunate are we that he
who assures our safety,
the strong-armed hero
on whom we depend –
foe-destroying Phālguna-Arjuna
is alive and well.

44 Fortunate are we that he
who with only a bow
destroyed Nivātakavaca
whom even the gods found
hard to defeat –
Pārtha-Arjuna is alive and well.

45 Fortunate are we that he
who in the city of the Matsyas
defeated the Kauravas
who had come
to steal their cows –
Pārtha-Arjuna is alive and well.

46 Fortunate are we that he
who with the strength of his arms
killed fourteen
thousand Kālakeyas
in a mahā-battle –
Pārtha-Arjuna is alive and well.

47 Fortunate are we that he
who with the power
of his weapons rescued Duryodhana
from the clutches
of the Gandharva-rājā –
Pārtha-Arjuna is alive and well.

48 Fortunate are we that he
who is diadem-and-garland-decked,
whose chariot is pulled
by pure-white horses,
who has Krishna himself
as his charioteer,
and who is dear to me –
Pārtha-Arjuna is alive and well.

49 Still deep in grief over the killing
of his son,
he who has vowed to achieve
Jayadratha's death –

50 Will Dhanañjaya-Arjuna succeed
in killing
the ruler of the Sindhus?
After he fulfils
his vow with Vāsudeva-Krishna's help,
will I see him?

51 Will the Sindhu rājā Jayadratha,
who seeks
the good of Duryodhana,
give delight
to his enemies after he is killed
by Phālguna-Arjuna?

52 Will rājā Duryodhana,
when he sees
the ruler of the Sindhus,
king Jayadratha,
killed by Phālguna-Arjuna,
make peace with us?

53 And will ill-minded Duryodhana,
after seeing
all his brothers killed
on the field by Bhīma,
be prepared
to make peace with us?

54 And when ill-minded Duryodhana
sees all
his mahā-warriors one by one
slain on the field,
will he realise his folly
and repent?

55 Will our enmity end
with the death
of just a single person –
Bhīṣma?
Will Suyodhana-Duryodhana
make peace
in order to save the lives
of the others?"

56 Filled with compassion rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
kept thinking like this,
while bloody battles raged
all over the field.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-NINE

1 "Which heroes of my army
(asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra)
challenged maha-powerful Bhīma
roaring like thunder-clouds?

2 I see no warrior
in all the three worlds
strong enough to face
angry Bhīma.

3 Sañjaya, I see no warrior
who can face Bhīma
brandishing his mace, –
he is like killing Kāla personified.

4 Who can fight Bhīma?
He uses chariots as weapons
against chariots, and elephants
as weapons against elephants,
and destroys chariots
as well as elephants.
None can fight Bhīma
except citadel-smashing Puraṁdara-Indra.

5 Which well-wisher of Duryodhana
could combat Bhīma
when wrathfully engaged
in slaughtering my sons?

6 Who had the courage to quench
the Bhīma-fire
consuming the leaves and dry grass
of my sons' armies?

7 Like Kāla killing creatures,
they saw Bhīma slaughtering my sons –
but who dared
to come to their rescue?

8 I do not fear Arjuna or Krishna
or the Sātvata Sātyaki
or yajña-born Dhṛṣṭadyumna.
I fear Bhīma.

9 Sañjaya, give me the names
of the heroes
who faced the Bhīma-blaze
that consumed my sons."

10 Even as mahā-powerful Bhīma roared
(continued Sañjaya),
mighty Karṇa roared back
and rushed at him.

11 Irrepressible Karṇa twanged loud
his powerful bow.
Eager to display his valour,
the mighty hero Karṇa

12 Succeeded in blocking Bhīma,
like a massive tree blocking a gale.
Seeing Vaikartana-Karṇa
blocking him, Bhīma,

13 Infuriated, released a volley
of stone-sharpened arrows.
Karṇa received them, and reciprocated
with a volley of his own.

14 The warriors, who witnessed
the Karṇa-Bhīma combat
on the field of battle,
trembled.

15 They heard the palm-strokes
of the combatants –
a horrendous din – and horse-riders
and elephant-riders trembled.

16 The bull-brave Kṣatriya warriors
felt sky and earth
become one with the noise.
Mahā-ātmaned Bhīma's

17 Roars so unnerved the warriors
that they dropped their bows.
Some were frightened
almost to death.

18 Panicking horses and elephants
urinated and defected
Dreadful ill omens appeared
out of nowhere,

19 Further dispiriting the warriors
on the battlefield.
Vultures, crows and *kaṅkas*
darkened the sky,

20 O king, while Karṇa and Bhīma
battled on.
Karṇa wounded Bhīma
with twenty arrows,

21 And pinned down his charioteer
with five arrows.
Smiling on the battlefield,
Bhīma attacked Karṇa

22 With a swift volley
of sixtyfour arrows.
Karṇa retaliated
with four more arrows.

23 O rājā! With effortless dexterity,
Bhīma splintered those arrows
with a counter-volley
of depressed-knot shafts.

24 Karṇa shrouded Bhīma
with an arrow-shower.
Enveloped in that arrow-shroud
of Karṇa,

25 The māhā-chariot-hero son
of Pāṇḍu
sliced the bow-handle
of Karṇa

26 And harassed him with a volley
of depressed-knot shafts.
But Karṇa, the charioteer's son,
picked up another bow.
The mahā-chariot-hero Karṇa
strung the bow
and recommenced his attack
on Bhīma.

27 Bhīma flamed with anger.
He wounded Karṇa
in the chest with three
depressed-knot arrows.

28 O bull-brave Bharata,
Karṇa looked as resplendent
as a three-peaked hill,
with three arrows on his chest.

29 Blood streamed
from his three-arrow-pierced chest
like red chalk flowing down
a mountain slope.

30 Deeply wounded, Karṇa betrayed
a little unease;
nonetheless, he pinned down Bhīma
with a single arrow.

31 Then, swiftly, he released
hundreds and thousands of arrows.
Harassed Bhīma sliced Karṇa's bow-string
with a razor-arrow.

32 With a broad-headed *bhalla*-shaft
he felled Karṇa's charioteer.
Mahā-chariot-hero Bhīma killed
the four chariot horses too.

33 O lord of the world,
Karṇa leapt from his chariot
and swiftly climbed into the chariot
of Vṛṣasena.

34 Illustrious Bhīma celebrated
the rout of Karṇa
with a victory-roar as thunderous
as the Parjanya rain-cloud.

35 Yudhiṣṭhira heard the victory-cry
and rejoiced
that Karṇa had been defeated
by Bhīma.

36 The armies of rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
sounded their conches.
The enemy warriors shouted
their own deafening cries.

37 Pārtha-Arjuna twanged
his Gāṇḍīva-bow,
and Krishna blew his conch.
Rising above that din,
Bhīma's victory-cry
shook the warriors.

38 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira's joy
and his armies' conches
and twanging of bows reverberated
in the battlefield.

39 The two heroes resumed battle
with straight-flying shafts,
Rādhā's son Karṇa weakly,
Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma fiercely.

40 Mahārāja, seeing Karṇa harassed
by the countless arrows
of Pṛthā's son Bhīma,
Duryodhana said to Duḥśala,
"See, Karṇa is in trouble.
Ready a chariot for him."

41 Ordered by the rājā,
Duḥśala rushed to Karṇa,
and Karna established himself
in Duḥśala's chariot.

42 But Pṛthā's son Bhīma succeeded
in wounding both
with ten arrows. Karṇa survived.
Duḥśala was decapitated.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED THIRTY

1 After the rout of his army
(continued Sañjaya),
seeing Arjuna,
Bhīma and the Sātvata hero Sātyaki
pursuing the ruler of Sindhu
king Jayadratha,
your son Duryodhana went
to meet Droṇa,

2 All by himself in his chariot,
hurriedly.
He was thinking hard,
planning what to do next.

3 His chariot was mind-swift
and wind-swift.
Quickly reaching Droṇa, eyes flaming,
he said worriedly:

4 "Arjuna, Bhīma
and heroic invincible Sātyaki
and other mahā-chariot-heroes,
vanquishing my warriors,

5 Are now concentrating
on the Sindhu rājā Jayadratha.
No one so far has been able
to stop them.

6 Unbeaten so far,
they are now attacking afresh.
Tell me, how did Pṛthā's son Bhīma
and heroic

7 Sātyaki frustrate even you,
O giver of honour?
Surprising, indeed,
like the ocean drying up,

8 Is your defeat, O twice-born one,
at the hands of Arjuna and Sātyaki!
People are whispering,
'What? Droṇa defeated?'

9 All are wondering how could
bow-expert Droṇa be defeated.
Impossible, they say –
unbelievable!

10 My ill fate! If these chariot-heroes
can baffle you,
a lion among men,
what chance have I? I am doomed.

11 Well, what's past is past.
O giver of honour,
what do we do now,
in this crisis?

12 Advise me, twice-born one,
what must be done
to protect the Sindhu rājā.
Tell me quickly."

13 Droṇa replied: "Much is possible.
But be practical, *tāta*, dear one.
Three mahā-chariot-hero Pāṇḍavas
have penetrated our ranks.

14 We must fear what's behind them,
what's ahead of them.
The greatest fear is where Krishna
and Dhanañjaya are.

15 The Kaurava army is under threat
from front and rear.
It's crucial that we protect
the Sindhu rājā.

16 *Tāta*! Dear one, he is terrified
by the wrath of Arjuna.
Wolf-waisted Bhīma and Yuyudhāna-Śātyaki
have also targeted him.

17 This is the result
of the dice-play of Sākuni.
No one lost and no one won
in the sabhā then.

18 Victory and defeat will come now
on the battlefield.
The dice Śakuni played with
in the sabhā

19 Were not dice but fearful arrows.
Dear one, *tāta*,
look at the Kaurava warriors
on this battlefield.

20 These warriors are the gamblers,
the arrows are the dice,
the Sindhu rājā the pawn,
O ruler of the world.

21 With the Sindhu rājā at stake,
we are fighting today.
Mahārāja, let us resolve
to give up our lives,

22 If need be, to save the life
of the Sindhu rājā.
On that will depend our victory
or our defeat.

23 So hurry there
and protect the protectors
of Jayadratha,
the rājā of the Sindhus.

24 I will stay here,
and send you reinforcements,
and block the Śṛñjaya-Pāñcāla allies
of the Pāṇḍavas."

25 As advised, Duryodhana proceeded
with his followers,
eager to display his fierce prowess
on the battlefield.

26 Meanwhile, the protectors
of Arjuna's chariot-wheels,
the Pāñcāla princes Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujas
also got ready.

27 Mahārāja, as they tried
to reach Arjuna
within your army, they were blocked
by Kṛtavarman.

28 Kuru-rājā Duryodhana spotted them
as they tried
to penetrate your army's ranks
to reinforce Arjuna.

29 The mighty Bharata Duryodhana
wasted no time
in launching a fierce attack
on the two brothers.

30 The two magnificent Kṣatriya brothers,
mahā-chariot-warriors,
lifted their bows
and prepared for battle.

31 Yudhāmanyu fired thirty *kaṅka*-arrows
at Duryodhana,
twenty at his charioteer,
and four at his horses.

32 With one arrow Duryodhāna
ripped Yudhāmanyu's war-flag;
with another your son
sliced his bow in two.

33 With a broad-headed *bhalla*-arrow
he felled the charioteer
from his mount, with four wounded
the four horses.

34 Furious Yudhāmanyu wounded your son
in the chest
with thirty arrows shot swiftly
and precisely.

35 Equally furious Uttamaujas also
targeted Duryodhana's charioteer
with gold-decorated shafts
and sent him to Yama's realm.

36 O Indra-among-rājās!
Duryodhana slew the two fore-axle charioteers
and the four horses
of the Pāñcāla Uttamaujas.

37 His charioteers and horses killed,
Uttamaujas swiftly
climbed for safety
into the chariot of his brother.

38 From the vantage of that chariot,
he slew the horses
of Duryodhana
with a stream of arrows.

39 Horses slain, valiant Yudhāmanyu
slashed the bow
and leather gloves of Duryodhana
with a shining shaft.

40 Excellent ruler-of-subjects Duryodhana
leapt from the chariot
brandishing a mace
and rushed at the Pāñcāla prince.

41 Seeing the enraged Kuru-lord
rushing at them,
Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujas fled
from their chariot.

42 O king, enraged Duryodhana smashed
the gold-carved chariot,
charioteer, horses and flag,
with one blow of his mace.

43 Smashing the charioteer and horses
your son, the foe-afflicter,
climbed in the chariot
of Madra's ruler Śalya.

44 And the two princes of Pāñcāla,
Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujas,
mahā-chariot-heroes,
drove in two other chariots to Bībhatsu-Arjuna.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-ONE

Sañjaya Continued:

1 Mahārāja, the horripilating battle continued,
the warriors
were harassed and weary
and greatly afflicted;

2 It was then, Rādhā's son Karṇa,
O bull-brave Bharata,
attacked Bhīma, like one rutting elephant
attacking another.

3 "Tell me," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"about the battle
near Arjuna's chariot
between Bhīma and Karṇa.

4 Was not Karṇa earlier
defeated by Bhīma in battle?
How did the mahā-chariot-hero
attack Bhīma again?

5 And how did Bhīma counter
the renewed attack
of the supreme warrior,
mahā-chariot-hero Karṇa?

6 After routing Bhīṣma and Droṇa,
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
had no one else to fear
except Karṇa.

7 Just thinking of the mahā-muscled mahātmā,
the Sūta's son Karṇa,
gave Yudhiṣṭhira
many sleepless nights.
How did Bhīma dare to oppose
Rādhā's son Karṇa?

8 How did Bhīma face the attack
of Brahmin-devoted Karṇa,
finest of heroes,
never retreating in battle?

9 How did these two mahā-powerful
warriors clash again –
Vaikartana-Karṇa
and wolf-waisted Bhīma?

10 How could it happen?
Karṇa, the Sūta's son,
a brother of the Pāṇḍavas,
compassionate by nature,
recalling Kuntī's plea –
he, fighting Bhīma?

11 And Bhīma – did he remember
all the misdeeds of Karṇa
when battling with him
on the field?

12 Sañjaya, my son Duryodhana
keeps hoping
Karṇa will rout the Pāṇḍavas
in battle.

13 How did Karṇa, on whom
my foolish son's hopes rested,
fight Bhīma,
warrior of valiant deeds?

14 *Tāta*, dear one, how did Bhīma
fight the Sūta's son,
depending on whom my sons challenged
the mahā-chariot-hero Pāṇḍavas?

15 How did Bhīma battle Karṇa,
the Sūta's son
who had done him
so many terrible wrongs?

16 How did Bhīma battle
with the Sūta's son
who, riding a single chariot,
conquered the earth?

17 How did Bhīma battle
with the Sūta's son
who was born with flesh-armour
and flesh ear-rings?

18 Sañjaya, you speak excellently.
Tell me everything:
how the two heroes fought,
and who won."

19 Leaving Rādhā's son Karṇa
(Sañjaya replied),
Bhīma rushed to Krishna
and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

20 But as he left,
Rādhā's son showered
*kaṅka*-arrows on him, like rain-clouds
drenching a mountain.

21 With a smile on his blossoming-lotus-face,
Adhiratha's son,
heroic Karṇa,
challenged Bhīma passing by.

22 "Bhīma! Even in their dreams
your enemies never thought you'd flee.
Why show me your back
just to see Arjuna?

23 O joy of the Pāṇḍavas!
This is shameful
for a son of Kuntī! Face me!
Shoot arrows at me!"

24 Unable to swallow the taunt of Karṇa,
Bhīma swerved his chariot
a half-maṇḍala
and confronted Karṇa.

25 Ready for chariot-battle,
mahā-glorious Bhīma
rained arrows at all-weapons-expert,
flesh-armoured Karṇa.

26 Desiring to end the combat
once and for all,
Bhīma murderously attacked Karṇa
and his followers.

27 O mighty monarch!
The foe-scorching Pāṇḍava Bhīma,
impetuous and wrathful,
drenched Karṇa with arrows.

28 With the māyā of his weapons,
the Sūta's son
neutralised the arrow-shower
of elephant-gaited Bhīma.

29 Blessed by bow-craft brilliance,
the mahā-muscular archer Karṇa
lorded the field
like ācārya Droṇa himself.

30 O rājā! Smiling his insult
at his adversary,
angry Karṇa faced Kuntī's son,
wolf-waisted Bhīma.

31 Kuntī's son Bhīma could not bear
the insulting smile of Karṇa –
a smile witnessed
by the warrior-spectators.

32 Infuriated, mighty Bhīma wounded
Karṇa's chest
with calf-toothed arrows, like a driver
piercing an elephant with a hook.

33 With twenty-one expertly aimed
gold-feathered arrows
Bhīma pierced the dazzling flesh-armour
of Karṇa.

34 Karṇa retaliated with five arrows
targeting Bhīma's
golden-net-caparisoned,
wind-fleet horses.

35 Then, O rājā,
Karṇa wove nets
with incredible speed
above Bhīma's chariot.

36 Mahārāja, the Pāṇḍava Bhīma
and his charioteer and war-flag
were smothered
by Karṇa's arrows.

37 With sixty-four arrows
Karṇa shredded Bhīma's armour.
Fiercely he wounded Bhīma
with flesh-cutting *nārāca*-arrows.

38 But mighty-muscled Vṛkodara-Bhīma
undaunted by the arrows of Karṇa,
struck back relentlessly
at the Sūta's son.

39 He remained unperturbed,
mahārāja, though his body was pierced
with the snake-venomous arrows
of Karṇa.

40 With thirty-two broad-headed,
sharp *bhalla*-shafts,
illustrious Bhīma struck back
at Karṇa.

41 Karṇa kept calm.
He countered mahā-muscled Bhīma,
who desired the death of Jayadratha,
with a rain of arrows.

42 Rādhā's son Karṇa fought
with poise and calm.
Bhīma recalled past insults,
and fought with anger.

43 Bhīma, brimming with wrath,
saw the calm of Karṇa
as fresh insult;
and fired another volley of arrows.

44 But the arrows of Bhīma
fell on Karṇa
like a flock of sweetly
chirruping birds.

45 The gold-feathered, needle-pointed arrows
of Bhīma
swarmed around Rādhā's son
like insects around a fire.

46 O Bharata monarch!
Karṇa, excelling chariot-hero,
though arrow-shrouded,
released a counter-shower.

47 But wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma
repulsed the thunderbolt-arrows
of Karṇa the glorious warrior
in midflight.

48 But yet again, O Bharata,
the foe-conquering hero
Vaikartana-Karṇa
targeted Bhīma.

49 O Bharata, we saw Bhīma
on the battlefield,
standing arrow-pierced,
like a bristling porcupine.

50 Like the sun he stood,
radiating shafts of rays,
wolf-waisted Bhīma,
pierced with sharp, gold-winged arrows.

51 Ablaze with blood,
Bhīma stood there
like a lovely aśoka tree
flaming with spring flowers.

52 Mahā-muscled Bhīma's eyes
rolled in anger.
He could not tolerate the conduct
of Karṇa.

53 He shot twenty-five *nārāca*-arrows
at Karṇa.
Pierced with those deadly shafts,
Karṇa looked
as beautiful as a white hill
swarming with snakes.

54 Once again Bhīma,
whose prowess was god-like,
wounded the Sūta's son Karṇa,
calm and defiant,
with two volleys
of six and eight arrows.

55 With another accurate arrow,
smiling valiant Bhīma
swiftly slintered the bow
of Karṇa.

56 Next, his arrows killed Karṇa's
four horses and charioteer.
Then he wounded Karṇa in the chest
with *nārāca*-arrows blazing with solar brilliance.

57 The arrows ripped through Karṇa
and plunged in the earth,
like sunrays shooting
through dark rain-clouds.

58 His bow splintered, his body pierced,
in deep pain,
Karṇa, proud of his manliness,
was compelled
to retreat from the battle
in another chariot.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-TWO

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: "Illustrious Paraśurāma
of the Bhṛgus,
a brilliant bowman, was the disciple
of Maheśa-Śiva.
And his disciple was Karṇa,
equally bow-brilliant.

2 Though all-talented Paraśurāma's disciple
Karṇa excelled even his teacher,
Kuntī's son Bhīma
defeated him
on the battlefield,
playing a līlā-game with him.

3 Sañjaya, what did Duryodhana say
when the hero
on whom his hopes rested
was worsted on the battlefield?

4 *Tāta*, dear child,
how did mahā-muscled Bhīma
perform on the field?
Seeing Bhīma blazing on the field
like an unquenchable fire,
what did Karṇa do?"

5 Like a storm-lashed ocean
(Sañjaya replied),
Karṇa, in a new chariot,
attacked Pāṇḍava Bhīma.

6 Seeing Adhiratha's enraged son Karṇa,
O lord of the world,
rushing furiously at Bhīma,
your sons feared
Bhīma had become the offering
in a sacrificial Vaiśvānara fire.

7 With loud palm-slapping
and twanging of bow-string,
Rādhā's son Karṇa attacked
Bhīma's chariot.

8 O rājā, it re-commenced –
the fierce battle
between heroic Vaikartana-Karṇa
and mahā-ātmaned Bhīma.

9 The two mahā-musled heroes,
enraged and murderous,
glared at each other
with flaming hatred.

10 Their eyes were bright red,
they breathed snake-sighs.
Both foe-exterminators rained arrows
at each other.

11 They fell upon each other
like two enraged tigers,
like two swift hawks,
like two fabled *śarabha*-creatures.

12 Bhīma recalled the humiliation
at the dice-game,
the sufferings in forest-exile
and the city of Virāta;

13 The robbing by your sons
of their prosperous, gem-rich kingdom,
and other insults
of the Pāṇḍavas
by you
and the Sūta's son Karṇa;

14 He remembered the plot to burn
blameless Kuntī and her sons;
he remembered the plight
of Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī
at the hands of the ill-minded
in the sabhā;

15 He remembered Duḥśāsana
dragging her by her hair,
and, O Bhārata, Karṇa hurling
male abuse at her;

16 Karṇa saying, "Get another husband.
The husbands you have,
Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons –
they are all impotent,
they are hollow sesamum seeds;
they are gone to hell."

17 O descendant of the Kauravas!
He remembered
the words spoken by the Kauravas
in your presence,
your son lusting for Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī
as for a maid-servant;

18 He remembered also the cruel words
of Karṇa
flung at the black-deer-skin-covered
Pāṇḍavas going into evil;

19 He remembered your foolish son,
himself prosperous,
boasting, saying Pāṇḍu's sorrowing sons
were like straws;

20 Dharmātmā wolf-waisted Bhīma
remembered all this;
foe-exterminating Bhīma
remembered also the insults
during his childhood, and decided
living such a life was worthless.

21 Ready to sacrifice his life,
that Bharata-lion
rushed at Karṇa
brandishing his gold-carved bow.

22 Weaving an arrowy network
of stone-sharpened arrows,
Bhīma shrouded the lustrous sun
of Karṇa's chariot.

23 But Karṇa, the son of Adhiratha,
smiled.
With his own network
of stone-sharpened arrows,
he ripped apart the network
created by Bhīma.

24 Adhiratha's son, mahā-muscled,
mahā-powerful,
mahā-chariot-hero Karṇa
shot mine sharp arrow at Bhīma.

25 Like an elephant assailed, Bhīma,
pierced with the winged arrows,
rushed against
Adhiratha's son.

26 Even as the bull-brave Pāṇḍava
attacked furiously,
enraged Karṇa retaliated
like one musth elephant against another.

27 The cacophony of his conch,
like the din
of a hundred kettledrums,
agitated the oceanic enemy army.

28 Seeing the elephants, horses, chariots
and foot-soldiers
of his army agitated,
Bhīma shrouded Karṇa with arrows.

29 Karṇa sent a rain of arrows
on Pāṇḍu's son.
In the confusion that followed,
the white-swan-complexioned horses
of Karṇa entangled with Bhīma's
dark-bear-skinned horses.

30 Seeing the bear-black wind-swift horses
mingling with the white,
your son's warriors exclaimed,
"Hai! Hai!"

31 Mahārāja, an enchanting sight!
Wind-swift black and white horses
like magnificent
black and white clouds!

32 Seeing Karṇa
and wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma
burning with anger
in their copper-red eyes,
your mahā-chariot-heroes
trembled with fear.

33 And the battlefield resembled
the kingdom of Yama, god of death.
O excellent Bharata,
it was horrendous to look at,
it was like the realm
of the rājā of spirits.

34 The mahā-chariot-heroes who witnessed
that mahā-battle
saw neither opponent
gaining advantage.

35 O rājā! O lord of the earth!
All they witnessed
was the dreadful consequences
of your ill policy
implemented by your sons
armed with multiple weapons.

36 The two splendid warring heroes,
shooting arrows at each other,
shrouded the sky
with arrow-nets.

37 The two mahā-chariot-heroes,
shooting murderously at each other,
looked like two
rain-pouring clouds.

38 *Prabhu*-lord, the two foe-exterminators
shot gold-filigreed arrows
that illuminated the sky
like giant meteors.

39 O rājā, their vulture-winged arrows
sped through the sky,
as lovely and graceful as cranes
in flying formation.

40 Krishna and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
seeing them battling,
realised the burden placed
on foe-subduing Bhīma.

41 The arrows of Adhiratha's son Karṇa
and Bhīma
hurled countless elephants, horses and warriors
to their deaths.

42 O rājā! O mahārāja!
Some had toppled, some were toppling,
some were dead.
A fearful carnage!

43 O bull-brave Bharata!
The field was littered
with the corpses of warriors,
horses and elephants.
It looked like the playground
of Rudra-Śiva!

SECTION ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-THREE

1 "It seems to me," said Dhṛtarāṣṭra
to Sañjaya,
"that Bhīma showed
incredible valour indeed,
battling as he did
with skilful and agile Karṇa.

2 Karṇa can singly challenge
gods, yakṣas, anti-gods and humans
who are armed
with every possible weapon,

3 So why was he unable to rout
Śrī-radiant Bhīma,
the son of Pāṇḍu?
Sañjaya, explain this to me.

4 How did they fight
their life-threatening combat?
It seems to me
that either could lose or win.

5 O Sūta, with Karṇa to help him,
my son Suyodhana-Duryodhana
hoped to rout the Sātvatas,
Pāṇḍavas and Govinda-Krishna.

6 The more I hear
of Bhīma's fearful feats
and Karṇa's repeated defeats,
the more I get depressed.

7 I think my son's misbehaviour
has doomed the Kauravas.
Sañjaya, Karṇa will never defeat
the bow-expert Pāṇḍavas.

8 Karṇa has lost
every single battle
that he has fought
against the sons of Pāṇḍu.

9 Even the gods led by Vāsava-Indra
cannot defeat them.
But my stupid son
seems to be unaware of this.

10 Cheating Pṛthā-Kuntī's son,
lord-of wealth Dhaneśvara-Yudhiṣṭhira,
my son, like a foolish high-hill honey-seeker,
is blind to his fall.

11 Cheating the mahā-ātmaned Pāṇḍavas
of their kingdom,
my deceitful son thinks it is now his;
and keeps insulting them.

12 And I have been too fond of him,
and done nothing
except criticise the mahā-ātmaned,
dharma-following Pāṇḍavas.

13 Far-seeing Yudhiṣṭhira
always desired friendship,
but my sons interpreted this
as weakness.

14 Keeping this and other insults
in mind,
mahā-muscled Bhīma decided
to fight Karṇa.

15 Tell me in detail, Sañjaya,
how Bhīma and Karṇa,
the two brilliant, bitter enemies,
fought on the field."

16 O rājā, listen then (replied Sañjaya)
to the details
of how those two battled,
like two untamed elephants.

17 Angry Vaikartana-Karṇa
displayed his prowess
by harassing foe-subduing Bhīma
with thirty arrows.

18 O most excellent Bharata!
Vaikartana-Karṇa wounded Bhīma
with swift, sharp,
gold-plated arrows.

19 Even so, with three sharp arrows
Bhīma sliced
Karṇa's bow;
with a broad-headed *bhalla*-arrow
he felled Karṇa's charioteer
from his seat.

20 Vaikartana-Karṇa
determined now
to put an end to Bhīma,
aimed at him
a *śakti*-spear studded
with gold and lapis lazuli.

21 Aiming that mahā-*śakti*,
that Kāla-*śakti*,
that spear of death,
the mahā-powerful son of Rādhā

22 Hurled that life-exterminating missile
at Bhīma.
Like Puraṁdara-Indra his thunderbolt,
Karṇa hurled it,

23 The Sūta's son hurled the *śakti*,
and roared.
Your sons heard the roar
and rejoiced.

24 With seven arrows
Bhīma sliced in midflight
that sun-dazzling
and fire-radiant *śakti*.

25 Illustrious monarch! Slicing
that skin-sloughed-snake-like *śakti*,
Bhīma waited for a chance
to take Karṇa's life,

26 And angrily targeted him
with peacock-feathered
and gold-winged arrows,
each resembling Yama's death-rod.

27 But Karṇa picked up
another fearful, gold-staffed bow,
and recommenced shooting arrows
at Bhīma.

28 O rājā! Bhīma splintered
in mid-air,
with knotted arrows,
the nine arrows of Vasuṣeṇa-Karṇa.

29 Mahārāja! Slicing those arrows,
Bhīma roared like a lion.
Snorting like two bulls
over a cow,

30 Like two tigers over a chunk
of meat,
they circled each other,
looking for an opening.

31 Like two huge bulls
in a herd of cows,
they glared at each other,
eyes blazing in anger.
Like two huge elephants manoeuvring
for a tusk-thrust,

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32 They stretched their bows taut,
and shot arrows,
mahārāja, burning each other
in the assault.

33 Eyes wide open with fierce wrath,
they pitted their skills
in deadly combat,
by turns smiling and mocking,

34 Or blowing their war-conches
in simultaneous fury.
O gracious monarch!
Once again Bhīma succeeded
in shooting an arrow
that sliced Karṇa's bow.

35 With more arrows he despatched
Karṇa's conch-white horses
to the realm of Yama,
god of death,
and knocked Karṇa's charioteer
out of his vehicle.

36 His horses and charioteer slain
by Bhīma,
Vaikartana-Karṇa
became deeply depressed.

37 Trapped in that arrow-net,
Karṇa did not know what to do;
seeing him confused,
rājā Duryodhana,

38 Shaking with anger,
said to Durjaya, his brother,
"Durjaya,
quickly drive your chariot
to where the Pāṇḍava
seems to be devouring Rādheya-Karṇa.

39 Kill that beardless eunuch Bhīma!
Help Karṇa!"
Ordered thus, your son Durjaya said
"I will!"

40 And showered warring Bhīma
with arrows,
wounding him with rine,
his horses with eight,

41 Shredding his war-flag with three,
and targeting him again
with seven more arrows.
Bhīma, infuriated,
with swift arrows sent his horses,
his charioteer,

42 And Durjaya himself
after wounding him
in his vitals,
to the realm of Yama,
god of death. Ornamented Durjaya
writhed like a snake

43 As he lay dying,
while Karṇa lamented
and respectfully circumambulated him
in *pradakṣiṇa*.
Having unchærioted his bitter enemy Karṇa,
Bhīma smiled

44 And shrouded him with countless arrows,
*śataghni* fire-missiles,
and *śaṅku*-javelins.
But Karṇa,
the great chariot-hero,
did not leave the field;

45 A foe-chastiser harassed and mangled
By fiercely angered Bhīma.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FOUR

1 Defeated by Bhīma, chariotless Karṇa
(continued Sañjaya)
climbed another chariot
and resumed his attack on the Pāṇḍava.

2 Like two huge elephants
grappling with tusks,
the two warriors stretched bows
fully taut
and pierced each other
with arrow-showers.

3 Karṇa targeted Bhīma
with countless arrows.
Screaming his war-cry,
he pierced Bhīma's chest.

4 Bhīma retaliated
with ten straight-speeding arrows
and twenty more
depressed-knot-arrows.

5 O rājā, Bhīma continued
his attack
with nine arrows
that grazed Karṇa's chest,
and one sharp arrow
that sliced his war-flag.

6 Then, like an elephant-driver
goring an elephant with hooks,
or a horse-rider
lashing a horse with whips,
Bhīma wounded Karṇa
with sixty-three arrows.

7 Mahārāja, grievously injured
by the illustrious son of Pāṇḍu,
valiant Karṇa,
eyes flaming red in anger,
started licking
his lips.

8 Mahārāja, like Indra hurling
his thunderbolt at Bala,
Karṇa shot
a flesh-decimating shaft.

9 That exquisite-feathered arrow
from Karṇa's bow
ripped through Bhīma's body
and slid into the ground.

10 Eyes ablaze with anger,
mahā-muscled Bhīma,
without thinking,
picked up a thunderbolt-mace,
four cubits long,
decorated with gold,

11 A massive six-sided weapon,
and hurled it
at the Sūta's son, slaughtering
his well-trained horses –

12 Like angry Indra killing anti-gods,
so did Bhīma with his mace.
Mahā-muscled Bhīma,
with two razor-arrows,

13 O bull-brave Bharata monarch,
shredded the war-flag
of the Sūtā's son
and killed his charioteer.
Abandoning the charioteer-bereft,
horse-less; flag-less vehicle,

14 O Bharata, dispirited Karṇa stood
on the field,
his bow stretched taut.
We witnessed his great prowess.

15 Though chariot-less, that great hero
blocked the advance of his foe.
Seeing Adhiratha's son
chariot-less,

16 O rājā, Duryodhana said
to Durmukha,
"Durmukha, Bhīma has unchārioted
Rādhā's son.

17 Get another chariot
for that finest of men."
O Bharata, obeying Duryodhana's command,
Durmukha

18 Rushed to Karṇas rescue
showering Bhīma with arrows.
Seeing Durmukha
rushing to rescue Karṇa,

19 Vāyu the wind-god's son Bhīma
was delighted.
He licked his lips. Cornering Karṇa
with his arrows,

20 Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma swerved his chariot
to face Durmukha.
Mahārāja, in the clash that followed,
with nine knotted arrows

21 Bhīma sent Durmukha
to the realm of Yama.
Adhiratha's son Karṇa
climbed into Durmukha's chariot,

22 Shining in it
like a dazzling fire.
Durmukha lay in it, mangled,
blood-spattered.

23 Seeing him, Karṇa's eyes
filled with tears.
He stopped fighting.
He circumambulated the body respectfully.

24 He sighed deeply,
at a loss on what to do.
Seizing this chance,
with vulture-feathered *nārāca*-arrows,

25 Fourteen in all,
Bhīma attacked the Sūta's son.
The powerful gold-feathered arrows
targeting Karṇa
sliced the golden flesh-armour
with ease,

26 O mahārāja, and a golden radiance
flooded the four quarters.
Those blood-drinking arrows
sucked Karṇa's blood

27 Like so many angry snakes,
O Indra-among-men,
like snakes instigated by Kāla;
they slid into his body
like mahā-*uraga* snakes
half entering their holes.

28 Rādhā's son Karṇa carefully selected
fourteen gold-decorated
fearful *nārāca*-arrows
for attack.
They pierced the left arm
of Bhīma,

29 And slipped into the ground
like *krauñca*-birds
gliding into a tree.
Penetrating the ground,

30 The *nārāca*-arrows
looked as resplendent
as the rays of the sun
sinking in the west.

31 Pierced in the arm
by the blood-drinking *nārācas*,
Bhīma stood on the field,
dripping blood,
profusely, like waterfalls
coursing down a hill.

32 Bhīma retaliated by wounding
the Sūta's son
with three winged arrows
as swift
as Garuḍa the king of birds,
O Bharata.
With seven more
he killed Karṇa's charioteer.

33 Mahārāja, the sudden retaliation
by Bhīma
shooting fresh arrow-volleys,
unnerved Karṇa.

34 In great fear, he fled
the battlefield on swift horses.
Bhīmasena kept taut
his golden bow,

35 Standing erect like a burning flame,
The undisputed chariot-hero.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FIVE

1 "Fate is all," said Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
"Shame on man's efforts! *Dhik*!
All the prowess of Karṇa failed
to defeat Bhīma!

2 Karṇa had hoped to rout both
Govinda-Krishna and the Pāṇḍavas.
I see no warrior
to equal him.

3 So Duryodhana persuaded me.
'Karṇa is brave,
he is a brilliant archer,
he is invincible.'

4 That is what foolish Duryodhana
said to me once.
'With Vasuṣeṇa on my side,
even the gods cannot defeat me;

5 How then can the powerful Pāṇḍavas,
O rājā?
But seeing Karṇa trampled
like a venomless snake,

6 Seeing Karṇa routed, what did Duryodhana
say then?
Aho! He ordered war-ignorant Durmukha
to battle singly –

7 A foolish decision –
a fly rushing into a fire!
United, Aśvatthāman, Madra-rājā Śalya,
Kṛpa and Karṇa

8 Are no match, O Sañjaya,
for Bhīma.
They know Bhīma's ten-thousand-elephant-
strong fearful prowess.

9 And his ferocious energy
like that of the wind-god Maruta.
The Yama-Kāla-Antaka-cruel-karma Bhīma –
why did they

10 Even allow his flaming anger
to fall upon them?
Mahā-muscled Karṇa,
relying proudly on his own strength –

11 That Sūta's son dared to face Bhīma
on the field.
Like Puraṁdara-Indra conquering anti-gods,
the Karṇa-conqueror,

12 The son of Pāṇḍu, cannot be conquered
by anyone.
Who, routing Droṇa single-handed,
penetrated my army –

13 To help Dhanañjaya-Arjuna –
which person, valuing his life,
dares face that Bhīma?
Sañjaya, tell me, who?

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14 Which Dānava anti-god dares face
thunderbolt-wielding Mahendra-Indra?
A man may return
from *preta-rāja* Yama's realm,

15 But he cannot return alive
after clashing with Bhīma.
The little-thinking who like insects
enter the fire

16 Of Bhīma's wrath are very foolish.
Recalling that day in the sabhā
when Bhīma vowed
to kill my sons,

17 In the presence of the Kauravas
who stood and listened,
and witnessing the defeat of Karṇa
on the battlefield,

18 Surely Duḥśāsana and his brothers
feared to confront Bhīma.
Sañjaya, ill-minded Duryodhana
repeatedly said:

19 'Karṇa, Duḥśāsana and I together
will rout the Pāṇḍavas.'
Now, seeing Karṇa unchArioted and routed
by Bhīma,

20 My son deeply regrets he spurned
Krishna's offer of reconciliation.
Seeing his armour-clad brothers
slain in battle,

21 Surely my son must be repenting
his misbehaviour.
Who valuing his life
will dare confront the Pāṇḍava

22 Bhīma, anger-inflamed,
standing there like Kāla,
death personified?
Escape is possible from the Vaḍavā-fire

23 Of the subterranean world,
but escape from Bhīma – never!
Neither the Pāṇḍava brothers,
nor the Pāñcālas, Krishna, Sātyaki,

24 When angered in battle,
care for their lives.
Aho! Sūta, my sons' lives
are in mortal danger."

25 O Kaurava descendant (replied Sañjaya),
fearfully afraid,
why repent now? All this carnage
is because of you!

26 You endorsed the hatred of your sons.
You spurned good advice,
like a dying man
refusing medicine.

27 Mahārāja, O finest of men
you drank
the deadliest Kālakūṭa poison.'
Suffer you will.

28 It is pointless to speak ill
of your valiant warriors.
Listen to what really happened
on the battlefield.

29 O Bharata, seeing Karṇa routed by Bhīma,
The following five brothers, all excellent bowmen –

30 Durmarṣaṇa, Duḥsaḥa, Durmada, Durdhara, Jaya –
In dazzling armour, jointly attacked Pāṇḍava Bhīma.

31 Encircling mahā-muscled wolf-waisted Vṛokadara-Bhīma.
They shrouded him with locust-swarms of arrows.

32 Seeing the god-like princes on the battlefield,
Bhīma smiled and patiently suffered the attack.

33 Seeing your sons jointly attacking Bhīma,
Rādhā's son Karṇa also targeted mahā-muscled Bhīma.

34 Although blocked by your sons, Bhīma attacked Karṇa
With sharp gold-feathered, stone-whetted arrows.

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35 Quickly the Kauravas encircled Karṇa protectively
And rained depressed-knot arrows on Bhīma.

36 With twenty-five arrows, Bhīma sent those bull-brave
Heroes, their horses and charioteers to the realm of
Yama.

37 They and their charioteers tumbled from their vehicles
Like huge flowering trees struck by a storm.

38 We witnessed this wonderful display of Bhīma's
prowess –
Simultaneously baffling Karṇa and killing your sons.

39 Beset on all sides by the arrowy showers of Bhīma,
The Sūta's son, O mahārāja, glared angrily at him.

40 Bhīma too, his eyes flaming red with anger,
Stretched taut his massive bow and glared back.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-SIX

1 Sañjaya continued: Seeing your sons dead on the field,
Karṇa's anger was such he thought life itself useless.

2 Seeing your sons killed by Bhīma in front of his eyes,
He felt he was responsible for their deaths.

3 Repeatedly recalling past insult and enmity,
Infuriated Bhīma rained sharp arrows at Karṇa.

4 Karṇa smiled and, wonding Bhīma with five arrows,
With seventy gold-winged sharp arrows he attacked
again.

5 Ignoring Karṇa's arrows, wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-
Bhīma
Targeted Rādhā's son with a hundred depressed-
knot arrows.

6 O gracious monarch! Piercing his vital organs with
five arrows,
Bhīma shattered the Sūta-son's bow with a *bhalla*-
shaft.

7 O Bharata! Frnstrated, the foe-harassing hero Karṇa
Fitted another bow and rained arrows at Bhīma.

8 Bhīma guffawed and retaliated with equal ferocity
By killing Karṇa's charioteer as well as his horses.

9 Mahārāja! Bull-brave Bhīma targeted the bow of Karṇa;
That gold-staffed, fearful-twanging bow splintered
noisily.

10 The mahā-chariot-hero Karṇa leapt from his chariot
And rushed at Bhīma, furiously brandishing a mace.

11 Tracking the mace as it swooshed towards him,
Wolf-waisted Bhīma brought it down with his arrows.

12 The son of Pāṇḍu, eager to kill the son of the Sūta,
Released a thousand-arrow volley at Karṇa.

13 But Karṇa neutralised them with a volley of his own,
And with another volley he sliced Bhīma's armour.

14 In front of the watching warriors, with twenty-five
Sharp *nārāca*-shafts he wounded Bhīma. Wonderful!

15 Illustrious monarch! This so infuriated mighty Bhīma
That he quickly targeted Karṇa with nine knotted shafts.

16 These sharp arrows ripped through the armour and
right arm
Of Karṇa, and slid into the earth like snakes in ant-
hills.

17 Enveloped by the countless arrows
from Bhīmasena's bow,
Karṇa turned his back
and fled from the field.

18 Seeing the Sūta's son,
covered with arrows
from Bhīma's bow, walk away,
rājā Duryodhana said:

19 "Drive swiftly to the chariot
of Rādhā's son."
O rājā, hearing this order,
your sons

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20 Attacked Pāṇḍava Bhīma
with a shower of arrows.
They were Citra, Upacitra, Citrākṣa,
Cārucitra, Śarāsana,

21 Citrayudha and Citravarman –
a vivid variety of warriors.
The mahā-chariot-hero
Bhīma

22 Killed all these sons of yours
with an arrow each.
They toppled on the ground
like tempest-tossed trees.

23 O rājā, seeing all
your mahā-chariot-hero sons killed,
Karṇa wept profusely, and recalled
the words of Vidura,
the Kṣattā son
of a female slave.

24 Then, climbing into another
excellently equipped chariot,
he recommenced his attack
on Pāṇḍava Bhīma.

25 With gold-feathered arrows
the two re-started combat,
with stone-sharpened shafts.
How magnificent they looked –
like two clouds
drenched in sunlight.

26 In a burst of rage,
Pāṇḍava Bhīma sliced the armour
of the Sūta's son
with thirty-six sharp *bhalla*-arrows.

27 O bull-brave Bharata!
The mahā-muscled Sūta-son
wounded the son of Kuntī
with fifty knotted arrows.

28 They looked like the sun
and the moon,
smeared with red sandalpaste,
blood-bespattered
with wounds caused
by mutual arrow-attacks.

29 They looked like snakes
with sloughed-off skins –
Karṇa and Bhīma,
blood-drenched with arrow-wounds,
armour shattered and ripped
with arrow heads.

30 They mauled each other
like two snarling tigers.
They showered arrows
like two clouds pouring rain.

31 They gored each other
like two tusk-fighting elephants,
with arrows for tusks.
It was an awesome spectacle!

32 They roared, they rained arrows,
the excellent chariot-herroes
weaving their chariots playfully.
in intricate maṇḍalas.

33 They grappled like two bulls
over a cow.
These two battling heroes
were like two lions.

34 Glaring at each other
with red, raging eyes,
they battled like heroic Śakra-Indra
with Virocana's son Bali.

35 Mahā-muscled Bhīma,
with bow stretched taut,
looked as magnificent
as a lightning-charged cloud.

36 Bhīma the mahā-cloud!
his bow-twang the thunder!
his arrows the rain!
Karṇa the drenced mountain!

37 O Bharata monarch!
Bhīma the awesome hero,
Pāṇḍava Bhīma rained thousands of arrows
on Karṇa.

38 Your sons witnessed the spectacle
of Bhīma's prowess
as he shrouded Karṇa
with *kaṅka*-feathered arrows.

39 So Bhīma battled with Karṇa,
delighting Pārtha-Arjuna,
Keśava-Krishna, Sātyaki,
and his two wheel-protectors.

40 Mahārāja, great was the gloom
of your sons
when they saw Bhīma's prowess,
patience and self-confidence.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-SEVEN

1 The son of Rādhā could not bear
(Sañjaya continued)
the bow-twanging and palm-slapping
of Bhīma,
just as a musth elephant cannot bear
a rival's trumpeting.

2 Briefly his withdrew from battling with Bhīma
And looked at your sons whom Bhīma had killed.

3 O finest of men! He looked at them,
and grieved deeply.
Then, breathing snake-sighs,
he again attacked Bhīma.

4 Eyes red with anger, breathing heavily
like a large snake,
Karṇa shot his arrows,
like the sun shooting sunrays.

5 O bull-brave Bharata!
The arrows from Karṇa's bow
covered wolf-waisted Bhīma
like a multitude of sunrays.

6 Like birds slipping into tree-nests,
the peacock-feathered arrows of Karṇa
penetrated
the body of Bhīma.

7 The swarms of gold-feathered arrows
from Karṇa's bow
sped everywhere
like swans flying in formation.

8 O rājā, not only from his bow,
it seemed the shafts
were shot from the flag, umbrella, yoke,
and other chariot parts.

9 They streamed through the sky
and through inter-space,
these arrows of the son of Adhiratha,
gold-decorated arrows,
arrows that sped swiftly
on vulture-wings.

10 But even as Karṇa assailed him
like death-dealing
Antaka-Yama himself,
caring little for life
Bhīma blocked his advance
with sharp arrows.

11 Unafraid, wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma,
the heroic Pāṇḍava,
repulsed the rain of arrows
shot by Karṇa.

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12 Pāṇḍava Bhīma trapped Adhiratha's son
in an arrow-net.
He wounded Karṇa
with twenty sharp arrows.

13 It was now the turn
of the Sūta's son Karṇa
to be assailed
by Kuntī's son
with the same arrow-strategy
he used earlier.

14 O descendant of the Bharatas!
Even your warriors
applauded the prowess of Bhīma
on the battlefield.

15 Bhūriśravas, Kṛpa, Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
Madra-rājā Śalya,
Jayadratha, Uttamaujas and Yudhāmanyu,
Sātyaki, Krishna, Arjuna –

16 These ten mahā-chariot-heroes
of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas
shouted "*Sādhu*! Well done!"
and screamed lion-was-cries.

17 O rājā, hearing that horripilating,
horrendous cacophony
on the battlefield,
your son Duryodhana said,

18 Addressing the rājā and princes
but specially
his own brothers:
"*Bhadraṁ vaḥ*:
May you prosper!
Proceed immediately and rescue Karṇa
from Vṛkodara-Bhīma.

19 Rādhā's son is in mortal danger
from Bhīma's arrows.
O brave warriors,
do all you can to save him."

20 O descendant of Bharata!
Acting on orders from Duryodhana,
seven brothers
rushed angrily at Bhīma,
and manoeuvred
to encircle him.

21 They cornered the son of Kuntī
and drowned him
in a torrential arrow-shower,
like monsoon clouds
drenching the slopes
of a proud mountain.

22 Boiling with anger,
the seven mahā-chariot-heroes
began their assault on Bhīma.
O rājā,
they were like the seven planets
unitedly attacking the Moon
at the time
of universal doom.

23 Then the son of Kuntī, Bhīma,
firmly gripping
his immaculate, devastating bow,
pulled it taut.
O rājā, the Pāṇḍava bowman
took clear aim,

24 Knowing his seven adversaries
were only too mortal,
and fitted seven arrows,
dazzling like sunrays.
Then, with tremendous force,
he fired them.

25 Mahārāja, he recalled
all the past wrongs
done to the Pāṇḍavas,
and he released the arrows
to suck the life
out of your seven sons.

26 The golden-winged, stone-sharpened arrows,
O Bharata,
penetrated your sons' bodies,
and sped through the sky.

27 The gold-feathered arrows penetrated
their chests,
and sped through the sky
like lovely-plumaged birds

28 O Indra-among-rājās!
Those seven arrows,
they drank the blood of your sons.
The golden wings
of those seven arrows
were clotted with blood.

29 Their armour ripped to pieces
by the arrows,
your sons toppled to the ground
frm their chariots,
like massive trees shattered by elephants
on mountain slopes.

30 These seven sons of yours
were killed by Bhīma:
Śatruñjaya, Śatrusaha, Citra, Citrāyudha,
Dṛḍha, Citrasena, Vikarṇa.

31 Of the seven slain,
Bhīma lamented Vikarṇa's death,
for Vikarṇa was the cousin brother dear
to the Pāṇḍavas.

32 "I vowed then:
*I will kill all of you.*
This was my vow. O Vikarṇa,
it is the vow
that has killed you.
I have kept my vow.

33 You chose to fight me,
O brave one.
It was your Kṣatriya dharma.
And so you died on the field.
The dharma of war
is cruel.

34 You always wished king Yudhiṣṭhira
and us well.
Justly or unjustly cut down,
the brilliant,

35 Supremely wise, equalling the gods' guru
Bṛhaspati himself,
lies Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma, awaiting death.
War is cruel."

36 Killing your seven sons
before the very eyes
of Rādhā's son Karṇa
(Sañjaya continued),

37 The leonine war-cry
of Pāṇḍava Bhīma
delighted the heart
of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

38 O rājā, so delighted was he
that he ordered
his brother's war-cry reinforced
with thundering drums
and other musical instruments
of his warriors.

39 For the war-cry of Bhīma,
O Bharata,
was Bhīma reassuring the Dharmarāja
of victory.

40 Conveying his joyous approval
to wolf-waisted Bhīma
in this way,
all-war-weapons expert
concentrated his attack
on ācārya Droṇa.

41 Mahārāja, the deaths in battle
of thirty of your sons
made Duryodhana think
of Vidura's prophecy.

42 Kṣattā-Vidura's advice was most reasonable
and well-meaning.
Duryodhana realised that nothing
could be done now.

43 In the sabhā, after the dice-game,
Karṇa
and your ill-minded son Duryodhana
ordered the princess of Pāñcāla
to be dragged in
and they abused her,

44 Karṇa using the language
of male arrogance,
in your very presence,
O lord of the world,
and in the presence
of all the sons of Pāṇḍu,

45 While all the Kauravas stood
and listened,
O Indra-among-rājās,
Karṇa saying these words:
"Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī, the Pāṇḍavas are doomed,
gone to hell.

46 Get yourself another husband!"
Today you see
the fruits of that misbehaviour
and injustice.

47 And your sons, hurling abuse like
"You are hollow
sesamum seed eunuchs"
at the mahā-ātmaned Pāṇḍavas,

48 Which made Bhīma nurse
the fire of hatred
for thirteen years –
that hate Bhīma is spewing out
on the battlefield today
by killing your sons.

49 O finest of the Bharatas!
Kṣattā-Vidura begged you,
almost in tears,
to make peace
with the Pāṇḍavas. In vain.
And so today
you and your sons
are reaping the fruits.

50 Well, such is fate.
Or why should you,
old, patient, wise, far-seeing,
have failed
to follow the advice
of well-meaning friends?

51 O tiger-among-men!
What use lamenting now?
You are guilty
of this great injustice.
If you ask me,
you are the cause
of the doom
of your sons.

52 O Indra-among-rājās!
Vikarṇa is dead,
and heroic
Citrasena is dead.
Many other sons of yours
and many
mahā-chariot-heroes
are also dead.

53 Mahārāja, all your sons
who came within sight of Bhīma,
have been eliminated
by him.

54 You were the reason
I had to see
thousands of warriors
butchered by arrows
from the bow
of Vṛṣa-Karṇa
and the bow
of Pāṇḍava-Bhīma.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-EIGHT

1 "I realise, O Sūta," said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"it's all my fault.
I am reaping the fruits
of the mahā-injustice I did.

2 Till now I thought:
What is past, is past.
What should I do now, Sañjaya?
Tell me.

3 I am now calm, Sañjaya
Tell me all
about the carnage
for which I am responsible."

4 Sañjaya said: Mahārāja,
the two magnificent heroes,
mahā-muscled Karṇa and Bhīma,
rained arrows at each other
like two clouds
releasing torrents.

5 Gold-feathered, stone-sharpened arrows,
with Bhīma's name
engraved on them,
plunged deep into Karṇa's body.

6 Similarly, hundreds and thousands
of peacock-feathered arrows,
shot by Karṇa,
made Bhīma their target.

7 Mahārāja, those swarms of arrows
falling on all sides
created panic in the warriors
on the battlefield,
like waves stirring
in an agitated ocean.

8 O subduer of foes!
The arrows of Bhīma,
like fearful snakes,
began slaughtering your warriors.

9 O rājā!
Littered with corpses
Of elephants
Of horses
Of soldiers
The battlefield
Was like the earth
Strewn with
Storm-felled tree-trunks.

10 Wounded by arrows
Shot
From Bhīma's bow
Your warriors
Fled the field
Screaming
"What is this?"

11 The Sindhu warriors
The Sauvīras
The Kauravas
Harassed and lacerated
By the fearful shafts
Of Karṇa
And Pāṇḍava Bhīma
Fled
From the field.

12 Their ranks decimated
Their horses and elephants
Killed
Their chariots
Shattered
They fled
Abandoning Bhīma and Karṇa.

13 "The gods are favouring the sons
of Kuntī
by slaughtering us
with Karṇa's and Bhīma's arrows."

14 Saying this, your panicking warriors
retreated to a far distance,
beyond arrow-shot,
as mere witnesses.

15 Then
On the battlefield
A river
A fearful river
A river of blood
Began flowing –
A river of joy
for heroes
A river of terror
for cowards.

16 Blood of horses
Blood of elephants
Blood of men
Corpses of men
Corpses of elephants
Corpses of horses;

17 Flagstaffs
Chariot-bodies
Ornaments
Elephants
Horses
Wheels
Axles
*Kūbara*-chariot-poles
Scattered and shattered;

18 Gold-decorated
Fiercely twanging
Bows
Hundred and thousands
Of gold-feathered
*Nārāca*-arrows;

19 Arrows shot
By Bhīma and Karṇa
Like slough-free snakes;
Lances and javelins
Swords and axes;

20 Gold-decorated
Maces;
Clubs
*Paṭṭiśa*-spears
Variegated flags
*Śakti*-darts
*Parigha*-iron-spiked bludgeons;

21 Golden necklaces
Golden armlets
Golden earrings and crowns
*Śataghni* fire-missiles
Littered the field
O Bharata.

22 *Valaya* wrist-rings
Finger-rings
*Cūḍāmaṇi* head-jewels
*Uṣṇiṣa*-diadems
Golden belts
Littered the field
O lord of the earth.

23 *Tanutra*-body-armour
*Talatra* left-arm-protectors
Neck-chains
Gold coins
*Niṣka* golden breast-plates
Dresses
Umbrellas
Shredded leather pieces
*Vyajana*-whisks

24 Mutilated elephants
Mangled horses
Feathered arrows
Splattered with blood
Massacred men
And other war victims
Lay on the field –

25 A splendid spectacle
Like the star-studded sky.
This wondrous and incredible
And divine karma

26 Was witnessed by the Cāraṇas
    and Siddhas of heaven,
and they marvelled,
    spellbound
Like a wind-fanned fire
    through dry grass,

27 Bhīma and the inflamed son
    of Adhiratha, Karṇa,
swept through the ranks
    of the armies,
destroying the chariots,
    shredding the war-flags,

28 Like two elephants reducing
    to pulp
a coconut grove. Your ranks,
    O lord of men,
gathered like massive cloud-clusters,
    were dismayed.
Karṇa and Bhīma wreaked havoc
    on the battlefield.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-NINE

1 Sañjaya continued: O mahārāja,
wounding Bhīma
with three arrows,
Karṇa shot a variety of shafts.

2 Wounded by the Sūta's son,
the mahā-muscled Pāṇḍava Bhīma
showed no distress,
he was like a battered mountain.

3 O lord of the earth!
With a sharp,
oil-polished *karṇī*-arrow,
he nicked Karṇa's ear.

4 Mahārāja! That swift-speeding arrow
sliced a radiant
flesh ear-ring of Karṇa.
The ear-ring fell
like a glittering star dropping
from the sky.

5 Anger-inflamed,
wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma
smilingly wounded Karṇa's chest
with a *bhalla*-shaft.

6 O Bharata descendant!
Pursuing his advantage,
Bhīma, with stupendous speed,
fired ten *nārāca*-arrows
that resembled slough-free snakes.

7 O Bharata, they lacerated and pierced
the forehead
of the Sūta's son Karṇa
like snakes
burrowing into their holes
in ant-hills.

8 Arrows sticking from his forehead,
Karṇa looked handsome
as, once earlier, when he wore a chaplet
of blue lotuses.

9 Seriously wounded
by the valour of Bhīma,
Karṇa steadied himself with the chariot's pole,
and closed his eyes.

10 Swiftly recovering consciousness,
Karṇa the foe-subduer
saw blood streaming down his body,
and was infuriated.

11 Raging with anger at the attack
by Bhīma's expert bowmanship,
Karṇa rushed
at Bhīma's chariot.

12 O rājā! O descendant of Bharata!
In retaliation,
furious Karṇa shot ten vulture-arrows
at Bhīma.

13 Belitting the valour of Karṇa,
Bhīma Pāṇḍava
rained a volley of deadly shafts
at him.

14 O foe-formentor, with nine arrows
enraged Karṇa
wounded Bhīma in the chest,
O mahārāja.

15 Those two men-tigers,
like two snarling tigers,
faced each other,
showering volleys of arrows,
like two dense cloud-clusters
pouring rain.

16 Frightening each other
with loud slappings of palms
and torrential volleys of arrows
of all kinds,

17 Inflamed with anger, each tried
to out-do the other
with feats of valour.
Then, O Bharata,
mahā-muscled Bhīma,
facing the Sūta's son,

18 Sliced Karṇa's bow
with a razor-sharp arrow –
and screamed his war-cry.
The Sūta's son,
the mahā-chariot-hero
flung away that bow,

19 And quickly brandished
another even fiercer.
In a half-*nimeṣa*,
half the blink of an eye,
wolf-waisted Bhīma pulverised
that bow too.

20 The third bow
The fourth
Fifth
Sixth
Seventh
Eighth
Ninth
Tenth

21 The eleventh
Twelfth
Thirteenth
Fourteenth
Fifteenth
Sixteenth –
All were destroyed
By Vṛkodara-Bhīma.

22 Not only these
But the seventeenth
And the eighteenth
And many more
Of Karṇa's bows
Were splintered by Bhīma.

23 Undaunted,
in the half-blink of an eye,
Karṇa was ready with another.
Seeing the rout
of the Kuru,
Sauvīra, and Sindhu warriors,

24 And the armours, flags
and other war weapons
shattered and littering the field,
and corpses
of elephants and horses,
and broken chariots,

25 The rage of the Sūta's son Karṇa
knew no bounds.
Fitting a massive gold-decorated
excellent bow,

26 Rādhā's son Karṇa glared balefully
at Bhīma.
As the Sūta's son rained arrows
in anger,

27 He looked as resplendent
as the sun
at midday in autumn.
O rājā,
he looked as radiant
as the ray-scattering sun –

28 The Sūta's son
with hundreds of arrows
sticking from his body.
Choosing, nocking,

29 And stretching and shooting an arrow
on the battlefield –
all these movements
seemed to be a single act.
Lord of the earth!
His bow was a maṇḍala
stretched taut,
it was like a *cakra* of fire,

30 As Karṇa shot his arrows
right and left.
Gold-feathered, needle-sharp arrows,
shot by Karṇa,

31 Shrouded the sun and the directions,
O mahārāja.
Depressed-headed
and gold-feathered arrows,

32 Released from his bow,
sliced through the sky.
The arrows that were released
by Adhiratha's son,

33 O rāja, sailed through the sky
like flocks
of *krauñca*-curlews in formation –
a lovely sight!
Vulture-winged, stone-sharpened,
gold-decorated,

34 Swift-speeding, fire-tailed
were the arrows
released by Adhiratha's son.
Powerfully shot,
from a powerful bow,
those gold-decked arrows

35 Fell continuously
on the chariot of Bhīma.
Hundreds of them,
golden arrows flying in the sky,

36 Shot by Karṇa –
like swarms of locusts.
As they sped from the bow
of Adhiratha's son,

37 They looked like a single
long arrow stitching the sky.
Like a cloud
drenching a hill,

Transcreated by P. Lal

38 Angry Karṇa drowned Bhīma
with arrow-showers.
O Bharata, Bhīma's strength, valour
and feats

39 Were witnessed by your sons
and your armies.
That oceanic arrow-shower released
by Karṇa –

40 Bhīma shrugged it off,
and attacked Karṇa.
O lord of the world! Bhīma chose
a gold-backed, massive bow,

41 Stretching it taut
into a maṇḍala-circle
till it resembled the bow
of Śakra-Indra,
and shot arrows from it
shrouding the entire sky.

42 With his volley
Of gold-feathered
Depressed-knot arrows,
Bhīma created as it were
A golden sky-garland –
An enchanting sight!

43 Pierced by the arrows of Bhīma,
the arrow-nets in the sky shattered
and arrow-pieces
scattered on the earth.

44 When the swarms of arrows
of Karṇa and Bhīma collided,
sparks flashed.
Awesome, that battle!

45 The gold-winged arrows obscured
the entire sky.
No sun could be seen,
no wind could be felt.

46 Nothing but arrows
all-enveloping the sky!
The Sūta's son repeatedly
arrow-targeted Bhīma,

47 Mocking the feats
of his mahā-ātmaned adversary.
O gracious monarch! The arrow-nets discharged
by both heroes

48 Clashed like two winds
spawning a whirlwind.
The colliding in the sky of the arrows
of the lion-heroes,

49 O best of the Bharatas,
created a conflagration.
Enraged Karṇa shot sharp
gold-decorated arrows

50 In his desire to kill Bhīma.
As they sped,
Bhīma splintered each shaft mid-space
into three fragments,

51 And shouted to the Sūta's son Karṇa,
"Stop!"
Then Pāṇḍava Bhīma again
shot an arrow-shower

52 Of flaming ferocity,
in a burst of vengeful anger.
Fearful noises – *caṭācaṭa* –
from the calf-leather gloves

53 Of the two adversaries
mixed with their leonine war-cries
and palm-slaps.
It was horrific –
all that din aggravated
by the rattle
of the chariots
and the twanging of bow-strings!

Transcreated by P. Lal

54 Sire, rājā, they stopped fighting,
the warriors,
eager to witness the clash
between Bhīma and Karṇa.

55 The celestial ṛṣis, the Siddhas, Vidyādharas
and Gandharvas
applauded with shouts
of "*Sādhu*! *Sādhu*!
Excellent! Excellent!"
and rained flowers on them.

56 Anger-roused,
mahā-muscled, heroic Bhīma
frustrated Karṇa,
and wounded him with sharp arrows.

57 Not to be out-done,
mighty mahā-muscled Karṇa
neutralised the arrows of Bhīma
with his shafts,
and wounded him
with nine snake-venomous *nārācas*.

58 But Bhīma sliced
those sky-coursing arrows
in mid-space, and shouted,
"Wait! Wait!"

59 Then the mahā-muscled,
infuriated hero Bhīma
shot in the direction
of Adhiratha's son Karṇa
an arrow that resembled
the rod of Yama.

60 O rājā! Rādhā's son Karṇa
saw that shaft speeding
and splintered at
with three of his arrows.

61 Pāṇḍava Bhīma continued to attack
with relentless showers of arrows;
and Karṇa
with equal intensity
continued to repulse every attack
showered on him.

62 Burning with anger,
the Sūta's son Karṇa,
using māyā-weapons and knotted arrows
against warring Bhīma,

63 Smashed both of Bhīma's quivers,
his bow-string,
and sliced the reins
of his chariot's horses
before killing them. With five arrows
he wounded the charioteer.

64 The charioteer fled, and climbed
into the chariot of Yudhāmanyu.
Fiercely angry,
Blazing like the doom-fire of Kāla,
but smiling,
slicing Bhīma's

65 War-flag and pennant,
was Rādhā's son Karṇa
Bow-less, mahā-muscled Bhīma
aimed a *śakti*-spear,

66 Rolled it expertly,
and angrily hurled it at Karṇa.
Caught off-guard,
nonetheless Adhiratha's son Karṇa
saw the gold-decorated
*śakti*-spear

67 Whizzing towards him
like a flaming comet,
and he shredded it
with ten well-aimed arrows.
Fragmented by the ten arrows,
the *śakti* fell,

Transcreated by P. Lal

68 Destroyed by a hero fighting
to save a friend.
Making up his mind,
the son of Kuntī

69 Resolved, "Either I win
or I die,"
and raised his sword,
which angry Karṇa,

70 O Bharata, speedily destroyed
along with the shield.
Mahārāja, unchorioted and sword-less,
brimming with anger,

71 Bhīma hurled another sword
at Karṇa.
Slicing the bow-string of Karṇa,
that massive sword,

72 O Indra-among rājās,
slid into the earth
like a roused snake.
Adhiratha's son laughed out loud,

73 But expressed his anger by picking up
a foe-destroying new bow
and, eager to finish off
Kuntī's son Bhīma,

74 He discharged hundreds
of gold-feathered arrows.
Though wounded by Karṇa's arrows,
valiant Bhīma,

75 To Karṇa's great distress,
leapt high in the air.
Seeing that leap of victory-seeking Bhīma,
Karṇa,

76 Rādhā's son,
crouched low in his chariot.
Seeing Karṇa bewildered
and trying to hide,

77 Bhīma stood firm, supporting himself
 by grasping Karṇa's flag staff.
That incredible feat
 of Bhīma
was praised by the Kauravas
 and Cāraṇas,

78 For it was like Tārkṣya-Garuḍa
 gripping a snake in its hole.
His bow shattered,
 himself unchcharioted,
Bhīma remained dedicated
 to his *sva-dharma*;

79 With his chariot behind him,
 he fought on.
Once again, Rādhā's son attacked
 Pāṇḍava Bhīma

80 Who refused to give in
 on the battlefield.
Mahārāja, the two heroes
 in face-to-face clash,

81 Thundered like two clouds
 at the end of summer.
The battle between those two roused
 lions-among-men

82 Resembled the clash
 between the gods and Dānavas.
Weaponless Bhīma was again targeted
 by Karṇa.

83 Seeing the hill-huge corpses of elephants
 killed by Arjuna,
Bhīma took cover among them
 to block Karṇa's chariot.

Transcreated by P. Lal

84 Safe in that fortress
of elephant-carcases,
immune to penetration
by Karṇa's chariot,
Pāṇḍava Bhīma
chose to save his own life
and gave up his plan
to attack Karṇa.

85 Conqueror-of-hostile-cities Bhīma,
seeking safety,
lifted one of the elephants
slain by Arjuna
above his head, and stayed firm
on the field,

86 Looking like Hanumān
holding aloft
the hill of medicinal herbs
called the Gandhamādana.
But Karṇa shredded that corpse too
with his arrows.

87 Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma retaliated
by hurling at Karṇa
whatever was within
his reach –
chariot-wheels and chopped limbs
of elephants and horses.

88 Whatever the Pāṇḍava in his fury
hurled at him –
Karṇa sliced them all
with volleys of sharp arrows.

89 Clenching his awesome,
thunder-storm fist,
Bhīma decided to kill Karṇa.
Then he remembered Arjuna.

90 He recalled the vow
that ambidextrous Savyasāci-Arjuna
had made, and,
though able to do so,
he refrained from killing Karṇa
on the battlefield.

91 And so the Sūta's son Karṇa continued
to harass Bhīma
on the battlefield
with his sharp arrows,
so much so that at times
Bhīma was rendered unconscious.

92 But Karṇa also,
recalling the words of Kuntī,
refrained from killing Bhīma,
preferring instead
to nudge and poke him
with one end of his bow.

93 Infuriated by Karṇa's condescension,
Bhīma breathed like a snake,
Bhīma snatched the bow
and hit it on Karṇa's head.

94 Struck by Bhīma,
his eyes red with anger,
Rādheya-Karṇa nonetheless smiled
and said to him

95 Again
And again:
"Beardless eunuch!
Idiot!
Glutton!
You zero in weapon-skills!
Coward!
Boy!
Don't ever dare
to fight anyone!

Transcreated by P.Lal

96 Low-minded Pāṇḍava!
Go where the food is –
Delicious food!
That's the place for you!

97 Bhīma!
Go to a forest!
Gobble roots, shoots, and fruits!
Rites and rituals – that's for you!
What do you know of fighting?

98 Vṛkodara!
Wolf-waisted one!
War is one thing,
Holiness is another!
Go the forest,
*tāta*, dear one!
Go and meditate there!
*Tāta*, dear one,
You're no warrior!
It's the forest for you!

99 Don't I know you!
You were the cook
In the Matsya-rājā's palace!
I know
what you're good for!
Ordering cooks
Scolding servants
Training attendants
to get dinner ready.
Lord of the menials!

100 Bhīma!
O mean-minded son of Kuntī!
I tell you –
Go to the forest,
And live on the fruits
You'll find there in plenty!
War's not for you.

101 Vṛkodara!
Roots and fruits
are good for you.
Bowing and scraping
before guests
is good for you.
I don't think
weapons of war
are good for you."

102 O lord of the world!
Cruelly Karṇa reminded Bhīma
of all the unpleasant events
that happened in their childhood.

103 Once again he jabbed Bhīma
with the end of his bow,
and mocked him
with these words:

104 "Go fight others, O gracious one,
not heroes like me.
Those who fight heroes
like me
suffer grave consequences –
such as now.

105 Go where the twin Krishnas are!
Either Krishna will help you,
Or Arjuna will.
Better still,
baby boy of Kuntī,
Go home. No use fighting."

106 Hearing these cruel words of Karṇa,
Bhīma guffawed,
and said in a loud voice
for all to hear:

107

"You rogue!
How many times
in the past
have I routed you!
How clever of you
to choose to forget
all that is past!
How splendid of you
to choose yourself
to praise yourself!
Even the mighty
god Indra himself
often in the past
had to pass through the cycle
of winning and losing
and losing and winning.

108

Low-born Karṇa!
Come, wrestle with me!
Even as I slew
the mahā-powerful and mahā-lustful Kīcaka,

109

I will slay you
in the presence of all these rājās."
Realising what Bhīma would do,
intelligent Karṇa

110

Withdrew in front
of all the assembled bowmen.
O rājā, in this way after unchariotting Bhīma,
Karṇa

111

Sang his own praises in front
of the Vṛṣṇi-lion Krishna
and mahā-ātmaned Pārtha-Arjuna.
So Arjuna,
encouraged by Krishna,
raised his ape-banner.

112 And, as advised by Keśava-Krishna,
fired a volley
of stone-sharpened arrows
at the Sūta's son.
Shot from his powerful arms,
the gold-feathered

113 Gāṇḍīva-strung arrows
pierced Karṇa's body
like *krauñca*-birds
slipping inside a mountain cave.
These Gāṇḍīva-fired
fierce snake-venomous arrows

114 Shot by Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
forced the Sūta's son Karṇa
to retreat far from Bhīma.
Bhīma had earlier shattered
Karṇa's bow.
Now Arjuna's arrows

115 Made him drive his chariot
far away from Bhīma.
Meanwhile, bull-brave Bhīma climbed
into Sātyaki's chariot

116 And drove to where his brother Arjuna
was stationed.
And Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
carefully targeting Karṇa,

117 Fitted a *nārāca*-arrow, as if Death
was preparing someone's doom.
Like Garuḍa
scouring the sky
in search of a magnificent snake
on the ground,

118 The *nārāca*-arrow whirled swiftly
towards Karṇa.
Droṇa's son Aśvatthaman sliced it
in midflight

Transcreated by P. Lal

119 To free Karṇa from the fear
of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
Infuriated Arjuna, with sixtyfour shafts,
attacked Aśvatthāman,

120 Arrows finely sharpened on stone,
O mahārāja,
and as he released
those sharp arrows,
he shouted, "Do not run!
Stay where you are!"

121 Afflicted by the arrows
of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
drove his chariot
into another chariot-formation
for safety.
On that battlefield then,
with gold-plated shafts,

122 Fired from his twanging
Gāṇḍīva-bow,
Arjuna drowned all other noises
on the battlefield.
Pursuing the fleeing son of Droṇa,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna

123 Continued to harass the ranks
of your army
with persistent showers of arrows.
Ripping the bodies
of horses, elephants and soldiers
with *nārāca*-arrows

124 Fitted with *kaṅka*- and peacock-feathers,
Arjuna
scattered your army.
O finest of the Bharatas,
the radiantly heroic and famed
and powerful

125 Son of Pākaśāsana-Indra,
Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Arjuna
began a ceaseless slaughter
of your warriors.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FORTY

1 "Day by day, Sañjaya," said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"my shining fame fades.
My soldiers die.
It is all Kāla's doing.

2 Infuriated Dhanañjaya-Arjuna routs
my army which,
protected by Aśvatthāman and Karṇa,
even the gods could not harm.

3 With Krishna and Bhīma
and the Śini stalwart Sātyaki
helping him,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's prowess increases.

4 The moment I realised this,
grief consumed my heart
like fire consuming
dry grass.
I see all the rulers
of the earth
including the Sindhu Jayadratha
similarly consumed.

5 After insulting diadem-decked Arjuna,
how could the rājā of the Sindhus
appear before him
and escape death?

6 Sañjaya, I have a feeling
the Sindhu rājā is dead.
Tell me in detail
about the war.

7 Who single-handed succeeded
in scattering my army,
like an elephant crushing
a cluster of lotuses –

8 Tell me about that Vṛṣṇi-hero Sātyaki
who came
to Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's aid.
You are a brilliant reporter."

9 O rājā, observing
the valiant Bhīma
(reported Sañjaya)
proceed to the aid
of Arjuna, but swiftly
intercepted by Karṇa,
the scion of the Śinis,
heroic Sātyaki,
gave chase to Karṇa.

10 Roaring like rain-clouds,
burning like the sun
when the monsoon ends,
with his bow he slaughtered
the troops of your son
as they trembled in fear.

11 Not one of your warriors
had the courage to face
valiant Sātyaki
as he roared on the field
in his chariot pulled
by silver-white horses.

12 Only one excelling rājā,
enraged Alambuṣa,
never fleeing from battle,
wearing gold armour
and brandishing his bow,
confronted Sātyaki.

13 O Bharata! A gory battle!
Unparalleled aggression!
Forgetting their weapons,
all the warriors watched.

Transcreated by P. Lal

14 Excelling rājā Alambuṣa fired ten shafts,
but bull-brave Sātyaki
shattered them all
in mid-flight.

15 With three more arrows
with fire-blazing feathers
fired with bowstring
stretched ear-taut,
Alambuṣa pierced
Sātyaki's armour.

16 Arrows like fire!
Arrows like wind!
Arrows like poison!
With four more arrows
Alambuṣa mutilated
The four horses
Of Sātyaki's chariot.

17 But the grandson of Śini
had the valour of the Wielder-
of-the-Discus Krishna.
He killed the four horses
of Alambuṣa's chariot
with four sharp arrows.

18 With a *bhalla*-arrow
as fierce as the fire
of doom-bringing Kāla
he severed the head
of Alambuṣa himself –
a decapitated head
adorned with ear-rings,
a head as radiant
as the full moon.
Before doing this he also
severed the head
of Alambuṣa's charioteer.

19 Slaying
the royal son Alambuṣa
the royal grandson Alambuṣa
bull-brave Sātyaki
of the Yādava calm
kept your warriors at bay
and advanced
towards Arjuna.

20 Sweeping through his foes,
the Vṛṣṇi Sātyaki
proceeded to Arjuna,
dispersing with his arrows
the ranks of the Kauravas
again and again
like a roaring storm
that disintegrates
cloud after cloud.

21 Wherever that lion-among-men
wanted to go
his horses took him –
Sindhu horses
of excellent breed
fleet-footed horses
disciplined horses
white-as-milk horses
*kunda*-flower horses
snow-white moon-white horses
gold-caparisoned horses.

22 O Ajamīḍha dexendant,
your sons then resolved
to gather a force
of excellent warriors
to block the advance
of impetuous Sātyaki,
a force at whose head
would be the foremost
of heroes Duḥśāsana.

23 Those brilliant warriors
surrounded the grandson
of Śini, Sātyaki,
but that Sātvata hero
repulsed their attacks
with showers of arrows.

24 Ajamīḍha descendant!
Śini's grandson Sātyaki
lifted his bow
and with fiery arrows
killed Duḥśāsana's horses.

25 Witnessing that unparalleled hero's unalloyed
Deeds, Krishna and Arjuna were overjoyed.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FORTY-ONE

Sañjaya continued:

1 When mahā-muscled,
never-wasting-time Sātyaki,
seeking victory for Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
targeted Duḥśāsana's chariot,

2 After penetrating the ocean-vast ranks
of his enemies,
the mighty gold-flagged Trigarta bowmen
surrounded him.

3 They surrounded him –
Those supreme archers
Flaming with anger
In their chariots
And afflicted him
With torrents of arrows.

4 But illustrious Sātyaki
of proven valour
singlehanded routed
those handsome fifty Trigarta princes.

5 The ranks of the Bharata warriors
resounded with palm-slaps.
Swords, maces, *śakti*-spears –
an impassable ocean!

6 It was exhilarating to witness
what Śātyaki did.
Such fleet-footedness!
Now I see him in the east,

7 Now in the south, now north,
now west!
As if a thousand chariots
were dancing everywhere!

8 Seeing the lion-like bravery and speed
of Sātyaki,
the harassed Trigarta warriors
began to retreat.

9 In another part of the field,
the brave Śūrasenas
tried their best to check Sātyaki
with arrow-showers,
like an elephant-driver
using hooks on an elephant.

10 Incalculably puissant and illustrious Sātyaki
quickly disposed of them,
and turned to face
the Kaliṅgas.

11 Sweeping through the ranks
of the formidable Kaliṅgas,
he approached Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
Pṛthā-Kuntī's son.

12 Like an exhausted swimmer
touching land,
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki was relieved
when he saw
that lion-among-men Arjuna
in front of him.

13 Seeing Sātyaki approaching,
Keśava-Krishna said to Arjuna,
"Son of Pṛthā, look!
Śini's grandson

14 This truly illustrious hero
is your pupil
and your loved-and-loving friend,
your *sakhā* also.
This bull-brave hero treats foes
like grass-blades.

15 Diadem-decked Arjuna! He is here,
your dear friend Sātyaki,
as dear to you
as your life,
after dreadfully routing
the hosts of Kauravas.

16 Phālguna-Arjuna, Sātyaki is here
after routing Droṇa
and heroic Kṛtavarman
of the Bhojas.

17 That all-weapons-expert hero,
that loved one
of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
after worsting
the finest Kauravas, is here,
O Phālguna-Arjuna.

18 Son of Pāṇḍu, routing the Kauravas
with his glorious feats,
mahā-powerful Sātyaki has arrived
for your darshan.

19 Son of Pṛthā-Kuntī,
heroic Sātyaki has arrived
after worsting from his single chariot
ācārya Droṇa
and the hosts
of other mahā-chariot-heroes.

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20 Son of Pṛthā-Kuntī,
the invincible-in-battle Sātyaki,
whom none can equal in prowess,
has arrived.

21 Son of Kuntī,
as instructed by Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
Sātyaki is here, routing the Kauravas
with his valiant might.

22 Son of Pṛthā-Kuntī,
after killing countless Kauravas,
like a lion massacring a herd of cows,
Sātyaki has arrived.

23 Son of Pṛthā-Kuntī,
Sātyaki has swiftly arrived
after littering the earth
with thowsands of heads of rājās,
heads as beautiful
as lotuses.

24 He is coming here swiftly,
brave Sātyaki,
after defeating Duryodhana
and his brothers
on the field of battle,
and killing Jalasaṁdha.

25 Sātyaki has arrived, after creating
a river of blood
clotted with flesh,
and scattering like straw the Kauravas."

26 Kuntī's son Arjuna, delighted,
said nevertheless to Keśava-Krishna:
"But, O mahā-muscled one,
I am not happy to see him.

27 O Keśava-Krishna, I have no news
of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.
Without the Sātvata Sātyaki,
will Yudhiṣṭhira survive?

28 O mahā-muscled one,
Sātyaki should have protected him.
O Krishna, why did he leave him
to come to me?

29 He has abandoned rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
to Droṇa.
Jayadratha lives.
And Bhūriśravas is attacking Sātyaki.

30 I carry a heavy burden because
of the Sindhu rājā Jayadratha.
On the one hand,
I must know
about rājā Yudhiṣṭhira;
on the other, protect Sātyaki.

31 I have vowed to kill Jayadratha.
The sun is setting.
Mahā-muscled Sātyaki
is completely exhausted.

32 O Mādhava-Krishna,
his charioteer and horses
are on the verge of collapse.
And Bhūriśravas,
O Keśava-Krishna,
and Bhūriśravas's allies are alert.

33 How can Sātyaki ever hope
to win?
Heaving crossed the ocean,
will illustrious Sātyaki,

34 That bull-brave hero of the Śinis,
drown in a puddle
the size of a cow's hoof?
The mahā-ātmaned,
all-weapons-expert chief
of the Kauravas,

35 Bhūriśravas, is pitted against Sātyaki,
to Sātyaki's peril.
What can I say,
O Keśava-Krishna,
except that Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
made a mistake

36 By ordering Sātyaki to come here
despite the danger from ācārya Droṇa?
Like a hawk
swooping upon a bird
to seize and kill,
Dharmarāja-Yudhiṣṭhira

37 Is the prey of Droṇa, continually.
I worry about him – how is the king?"

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FORTY-TWO

1 Seeing the invincible-in-battle
Sātvata hero Sātyaki
dominating the field of battle
(Sañjaya continued),
infuriated Bhūriśravas intercepted
and attacked him.

2 Mahārāja, Bhūriśravas of the Kauravas
said to Sātyaki:
"It is my good luck
to have spotted you today

3 Because today I will fulfil
a long-cherished hope.
Run! – There is no other way
you'll remain alive.

4 Dāśārha hero! Proud of your prowess,
are you not?
I'll kill you today,
and delight Suyodhana-Duryodhana.

5 Keśava-Krishna and Arjuna
both today
will see my arrows consume you
on the field.

6 And when Dharma's son rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
hears of your death,
he'll hang his head in shame,
for he sent you here.

7 And Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
will learn about my prowess
when he sees
your blood-spattered corpse.

8 Long have I wanted to fight you
like Śakra-Indra
battling with Bali
in the war of gods and anti-gods.

9 O Sātvata descendant!
I promise you a fierce fight today,
a battle that will show
my valour and manliness.

10 Like Rāma's younger brother Lakṣmaṇa
despatching Rāvaṇi-Indrajit, Rāvaṇa's son,
to the realm of Yama, god of death,
I will slay you on the battlefield.

11 O descendant of Madhu,
today Krishna
and Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Arjuna
and Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
abandoning hope,
will watch how I kill you.

12 O descendant of Madhu, today,
killing you with sharp arrows,
I'll delight the widows
of your victims.

13 Like a deer spotted by a lion
is doomed,
I have targeted you, O Mādhava,
you are doomed."

14 O rājā, Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki smiled
and replied:
"Listen, Kaurava,
I fear none in battle.

15 Your noisy babble means nothing
to me.
Only he who makes me weapon-less
can kill me.

16 The man who kills me,
will kill all his enemies.
Why all this big talk?
Show me what you can do.

17 Your roaring is like autumn clouds;
it's fruitless, empty.
Brave one, to hear you roar
makes me laugh.

18 Long have I wanted to battle
with you.
Let us start!
I am eager to fight.

19 Lowest of men, rascal,
today I will not stop till I kill you!"
Daring each other,
the bull-brave heroes,

20 Blazing with anger, eager to kill,
began battling.
The two illustrious warriors
circled and clashed

21 Like two massive musth elephants.
The two foe-smiters,
Bhūriśravas and Sātyaki,
rained showers

22 Of arrows on each other
like two huge rain-clouds.
Obscuring Sātyaki with shafts,
Somadatta's son,

23 O excellent Bharata,
shot fierce arrows at him.
With ten shafts Somadatta's son
wounded Sātyaki,

24 And followed these with volleys
of sharp arrows.
O experor! In mid-flight itself,
with wondrous weapons

25 Sātyaki destroyed all the arrows,
O *prabhu*-lord.
They deluged each other
with torrents of arrows,

26 The excellently born Kuru
and equally excellent Vṛṣṇi.
Like two clawing lions,
like two tusk-thrusting elephants,

27 The two heroes fought
with arrows and chariot-*śaktis.*
Their bodies mangled
and streaming with blood,

28 They fought like gamblers staking
their lives.
The Kuru of glorious karma,
the Vṛṣṇi of valiant fame –

29 They fought like two giant elephants,
two herd-leaders.
With Brahmā's realm as their goal,
they fought on,

30 Roaring at each other,
both seeking the supreme felicity.
Sātyaki and Somadatta's son
rained shafts at each other,

31 And the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra watched
and marvelled.
They stood and witnessed
the two remarkable heroes

32 Battling like two leader-elephants
over a she-elephant.
Slaughtering each other's horses,
slicing each other's bows,

33 Deprived of their chariots,
they clashed with swords.
Armed with two beautifully decorated
bull's-hide shields,

34 And two unsheathed swords –
a magnificent sight!
Manoeuvring expertly
in intricate maṇḍala footwork,

35 The two furious foe-annihilators
fought on,
dazzling with swords, armours, gold neck-chains
and *aṅgada*-bracelets.

36 The illustrious warriors –
they wheeled, they leapt,
they thrust sideways, whirled, ran,
backed, advanced;

37 They showed their superb expertise
in swordsmanship.
Each looked for an opening
in his opponent.

38 What exquisite sword-play!
Such skill!
Such training! What expert swordsmen
on the battlefield!

39 O Indra among rājās!
Only briefly
did they panse,
while all the warriors watched.

40 O earth-lord! They shattered each other's
hundred-moon-decked shields;
then the lion-men were locked
in hand-to-hand combat.

41 Broad-chested
Long-armed
They pummelled each other
With arms
That resembled
Iron-studded clubs.

42 O rājā!
They locked fists
They struck necks
And enchanted
The warriors-
Turned-spectators.

43 O rājā! The terrifying noise created
by the clash of these heroes
was like thunder
striking a mountain.

44 Like two elephants
in a tusk-fight
Like two bulls
locking horns
They twined
their arms
They banged
their heads

45 They tripped
each other
They twisted
their legs
They slapped their arm-pits
with *tomara*-lance ferocity
They grappled like hooks
Blocking and punching and evading

46 Rolling on the ground
Leaping
Retreating
Challenging
Hurling –
The two mahā-ātmaned heroes
Bull-brave Kaurava Bhūriśravas
Bull-brave Sātvata Sātyaki.

47 O descendant of the Bharatas!
The two mahā-powerful heroes
displayed the thirty-two tactics
of personal combat.

48 Vāsudeva-Krishna saw the Sātvata
completely un-weaponed,
and said to Arjuna,
"See unchारioted Sātyaki still fighting!

49 He's tired. Help him. He has penetrated
the Bharata ranks
and fought with all the bravest
of their warriors.

50 The leading warriors
and mahā-chariot-heroes
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son Duryodhana
have been killed
in hundreds and thousands
by this Vṛṣṇi hero.

51 He is tired out, Arjuna,
and now Bhūriśravas,
who has offered countless *dakṣiṇā*-gifts
to propitiate the gods in *yajñas*,
is attacking him.
An unfair encounter!"

52 O rājā, anger-inflamed Bhūriśravas
rushed at Sātyaki
like one musth elephant
charging against another.

53 O rājā, Keśava-Krishna and Arjuna
were witnesses
to the clash between the two warriors
in their chariots.

54 Mahā-muscled Krishna
said to Arjuna:
"Look! The tiger of the Vṛṣṇi-
and-Andhaka clan
is terrorised by Somadatta's son
Bhūriśravas.

55 His magnificent feats have completely
exhausted him.
Sātyaki is your pupil.
Help him.

56 O radiant Arjuna, O tiger-among-men,
do what you can
to prevent Śatyaki from succumbing
to *yajña*-performing Bhūriśravas"

57 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna cheerfully assured
Vāsudeva-Krishna:
"Look at the bull-brave hero
of the Kauravas
and the excellent Vṛṣṇi-warrior –
both sporting,

58 It seems, on the battlefield
like a musth elephant
in a forest with the leader
of a pride of lions."
Even as the Pāṇḍava Dhanañjaya-
Arjuna said this,

59 O bull-of-the-Bharata dynasty,
the warriors shouted "Hai! Hai!"
for Bhūriśravas felled Sātyaki
to the ground.

60 *Yajña*-performing Bhūriśravas looked magnificent
as he dragged
the Sātvata hero Sātyaki
on the field
like a lion mauling
a huge musth elephant.

61 Unsheathing his sword, Bhūriśravas
gripped Sātyaki by the hair.
Then he kicked Sātyaki
in the chest.

62 He stood poised to sever
the head of Sātyaki.
Sātyaki shuddered
and rolled his head.

63 O Bharata descendant!
Bhūriśravas holding his hair,
the head of Sātyaki whirled
like a potter's wheel.

64 Seeing the Sātvata hero
in this plight,
O rājā, Vāsudeva-Krishna
said to Arjuna:

65 "Mahā-muscled one!
Look, the Andhaka tiger,
your pupil, your equal in bowmanship,
tormented by Bhūriśravas!

66 What use is valour, Pṛthā-Arjuna?
It has not helped
the valiant Vṛṣṇi Sātyaki
against his foe Bhūriśravas."

67 These words of Vāsudeva-Krishna
made mahā-muscled Pāṇḍava Arjuna
offer silent pūjā-respect
to Bhūriśravas.

68 *He drags the excelling Sātvata hero*
*on the field*
*as if playing with him.*
*The Kaurava compels my admiration.*

69 *He does not kill him.*
*He drags him on the field*
*like the lord of the jungle*
*clawing a huge elephant.*

70 With this pūjā-prasie of the Kaurava
in his mind,
O rājā, mahā-muscled Arjuna said
to Vāsudeva-Krishna:

71 "Madhava-Krishna, to me Saindhava Jayadratha
is uppermost,
not Sātyaki. But to save him,
I'll do my best."

72 Giving his word to Vāsudeva-Krishna,
Pāṇḍava Arjuna
fitted a sharp arrow
to his Gāṇḍīva bow.

73 Shot with the strength
of Pārtha-Arjuna's arm,
that sharp arrow sped
like a mahā-meteor
and cut off the bright-braceleted
sword-brandishing right arm
of the famed *yajña*-performer
Bhūriśravas.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FORTY-THREE

1 Still holding the sword (continued Sañjaya),
the chopped arm,
beautifully braceleted, of Bhūriśravas
fell on the earth.
Awe and grief erupted in all
who watched.

2 Sliced by diadem-decked Arjuna
who was not visible,
the arm fell loudly
on the earth,
looking like a five-headed
sleek *pannaga*-serpent.

3 The Kaurava Bhūriśravas, disabled
by the son of Pṛthā-Kuntī,
leaving Sātyaki,
began accusing Arjuna.

4 Mahārāja, one-armed he stood
on the field of battle,
like a one-winged bird,
like a one-wheeled chariot,
and in front of all the Kṣatriyas
he accused Arjuna:

5 "Kuntī's son!
You did wrong.
You did a cruel deed
Shooting hidden
Slicing my arm.
I was not fighting you.

6 What will you tell Dharma's son,
rājā Yudhiṣṭhira?
'Bhūriśravas was not fighting me
but I killed him.'

7 Is this the war-science they taught you,
O Kuntī's son –
mahātmā Indra, Droṇa, Kṛpa,
Rudra-Śiva?

8 I'm told you know weapons-dharma
better than all else.
Why then do you cut the arm of one
not fighting you?

9 A noble warrior
never strikes
a distracted foe
a frightened foe
an uncharioted foe
a foe who begs for mercy
a foe in dire peril.

10 Tell me, Pṛthā's son:
why did you do
this vile and unmanly deed
this heinous karma
that only a criminal will do?

11 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
it requires a noble man
to do noble needs.
A noble man is never ignoble.

12 O tiger-among-men!
A man picks up
The ways and virtues
Of people he mixes with
Of people he grows up with –
This is true of you too.

13 Born among rājās
A descendant
of the Kaurava dynasty
How could you violate
Kṣatriya-dharma?
How could you
ever do this –
You who observed every vow
required to build
exemplary character?

14 No.
This wickedness
To save the Vṛṣṇi
Could never be your idea.
It must be Vāsudeva-Krishna
Who stirred you to do it.
You are incapable
Of such meanness.

15 What kind of man
Will attack a warrior
Who's fighting another?
Only a close friend,
A loved-and-loving *sakhā* of Krishna
Would do that.

16 Son of Pṛthā!
The Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas
Are mean and vicious
And bitter life-long enemies.
Why have you
Made them your models?"

17 Arjuna replied to Bhūriśravas
(continued Sañjaya):
"I can see
How a man's mind grows old
When his body grows old.

18 Lordly one,
All that you have said
Is pointless.
You know Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna
in and out.
You know me
in and out.
I am Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna.
Yet you accuse us!

19 I know
what battle-dharma is.
I know
what the śāstras say.
I can never do adharma.
Your charges are baseless.

20 Kṣatriyas fight their foes
With the support of their own men –
Their brothers
Their fathers
Their sons
Their friends
Their relatives.

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21 All these constitute
a united strength.
Tell me –
Why should I not
Protect Sātyaki,
My pupil and also
My loved relative?

22 Is he not risking
his own life
for my sake?
Is his life not precious?
He is like my own
right arm.

23 Seeing him suffer
your brutal attack,
how could I desert him?
I saw him helpless,
half-senseless, dragged
on the battlefield.

24 Rājā!
A soldier
On the field of battle
Does not fight
Only to save himself.
Ruler of men!
He fights
To save those
Who are fighting for him.

25 It's the duty of those
Who are protected
To protect the rājā
Who protects them.
Had I watched Sātyaki killed

26 In front of my eyes,
Without trying to save him,
Infamy and evil
Would have fallen on me.
So I came
to his rescue.
Why are you
so agitated?

27 O rājā,
Your accusation is:
'I was fighting another,
And you maimed me.'
I'll admit
It was an error of judgement.

28 Shaking my armour
Riding in my chariot
Twanging my bow
I was engaged
In a confused clash
With hosts of enemies.

29 Thunderous roaring
all around me –
Chariots
Elephants
Horses
Foot-soldiers!
Leonine war-cries
Reverberating
From a colossal
Army-ocean –

30 Friend
Fighting
Foe –
And foe
Fighting
Friend –
Who could make out
If Sātvata-Sātyaki
Was fighting
Just one person?

31 He had fought
And routed
Countless mahā-chariot-heroes.
His body was mangled
With weapon-wounds.
His horses were debilitated.
He was near-collapse.

32 You defeated
That mahā-chariot-hero
In that state
Of helplessness,
And you thought
No end of yourself
And your glory and your valour!

33 And you wanted
To slice his head
With your sword!
Who would not
Have helped Sātyaki
In that plight?

34 If you must accuse,
accuse yourself.
Blame yourself
for not being able
to protect yourself
from me.
Brave one!
Tell me –
How would you
have behaved
if someone dependent
on you
needed your help
in such dire straits?"

35 Bhūriśravas heard this
(Sañjaya continued)
and leaving Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
the illustrious mahā-muscled stake-bannered hero
sat in *prāya*-vow posture on the field
calmly awaiting the approach of death.

36

Virtue-wishing
Merit-seeking
Bhūriśravas
Made a bed of arrows
On the battlefield
Smoothed the arrow-bed
With his left hand
And hoping to attain
The realm-of-Brahma
Brahma-loka
He offered
As sacrifice
His *prāṇa* life-breaths
To the Life-Breath of all.

37

Serene in samādhi
Focusing his eyes on the sun
Concentrating his mind on water
Meditating on the mahā-Upaniṣads
Liberated in the discipline of Yoga
He became completely silent.

38

All the warriors
On the field of battle
Blamed Krishna
And Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
And sang the praises
Of bull-brave Bhūriśravas.

39

The two-Krishnas –
Krishna-and-Arjuna –
Were not displeased
By the blame –
And sacrifical-stake-bannered
Bhūriśravas
Was not delighted
By the praise.

40

O rājā,
When your sons began blaming
Similarly,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna chafed
At what they said
Echoing Bhūriśravas's charges.

41 O descendant of Bharata!
Pāṇḍu's son Phālguna-Arjuna
without anger or ill-will
as if reminding them of the past
said:

42 "This is my mahā-vow
And all the rājās know it:
No one can kill anyone
on our side
So long as that person
is within my arrow-shot.

43 Yūpaketu-Bhūriśravas!
Stake-bannered one!
Remember this,
And stop blaming me.
It does not become one
Ignorant of dharma
To point a finger
Of blame
At others.

44 Sword upraised
On the battlefield
You wanted
To kill the Vṛṣṇi hero.
By lopping off your arm
I did not violate
The dharma
Of fair combat.

45 *Tāta*, my friend,
Tell me:
Which man-of-dharma
Will pūjā-praise
The slaughter of Abhimanyu
A mere boy
All alone
Weaponless
Chariot-less
Armour-less
Defenceless?

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46 I did right
To kill
Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas
The way I did,
For was not Bhūriśravas
An ally of Duryodhana
Who flouts all noble principles?

47 I have firmly resolved
To protect
Anyone in mortal danger,
Specially such heroes
As face getting massacred
In front of my eyes.

48 Mahā-ātmaned
Bhūriśravas
Of the Kauravas
Was on the verge
Of slaughtering Sātyaki.
I kept my vow
And saved Sātyaki."

49 Thinking of this
And other past events
(continued Sañjaya)
Arjuna was tortured with grief
And said nonetheless
To Bhūriśravas of the Kauravas:

50 "Shame
On Kṣatriya-dharma!
Shame on a dharma
That reduces to such
A pitiful state
A lord-among-men like you
Who sheltered others.

51 O Puruṣottama!
Finest-among-men!
Had I not already
Taken a vow,
I would never have dared
To harm a person
So noble as you."

52 Bhūriśravas heard
the words of Pārtha-Arjuna.
He lowered his head
till it touched the ground.
With his left hand
he picked up his right arm
and placed it before Arjuna.

53 Mahārāja!
Mahā-famed
Sacrificial-stake-bannered
Yūpaketu-Bhūriśravas
Listened to the words
Of Pārtha-Arjuna
Lowered his head
And kept silent.

54 Arjuna said:
"O elder brother of Śala!
The love I have for Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
For brave Bhīma, for Nakula and Sahadeva,
I have for you too.

55 Mahā-ātmaned Krishna and I
Grant that you attain
The realm of the pious and virtuous
Where Uśīnara's son Śibi is."

56 Vāsudeva-Krishna said:
"Noble performer
Of the *agnihotṛ*-sacrifice!
Go speedily
To my pure and radiant realm
To which
Even Brahmā and the gods aspire
And be like me
Borne on the back of Garuḍa."

57 Released by Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas
(continued Sañjaya)
Śini's grandson Sātyaki stood up
And raised his sword
To decapitate
Mahā-ātmaned Bhūriśravas.

58 Śala's morally spotless elder brother,
Generous *dakṣiṇā*-granting Bhūriśravas,
Already as if slain by Pāṇḍava Arjuna,
And now fatally targeted by Sātyaki,

59 Sat on the field of battle, armless,
Like an elephant with a severed trunk.
All the warriors condemned the intention
Of Sātyaki; but malevolent-minded Sātyaki,

60 Though advised not to do so
By mahā-ātmaned Krishna and Pārtha-Arjuna,
By Bhīma, by Arjuna's two wheel-protectors,
By Aśvatthāman and Kṛpa,

61 By Karṇa, Vṛṣasena, the Sindhu rājā Jayadratha,
Sātyaki refused to listen.
Even as hosts of warriors screamed disapproval,
Sātyaki beheaded Bhūriśravas.

62 Sātyaki beheaded the Kaurava
Who sat serene in *prāya*-meditation
Awaiting release on the battlefield
After Pārtha-Arjuna had severed his right arm.

63 Not a single word of praise
Came from the assembled warriors
For this over-kill by Sātyaki
Of a Kaurava already slain by Arjuna.

64 Witnessing the slaughter
Of Bhūriśravas
Absorbed in *prāya*-meditation
On the field of battle –
Bhūriśravas who was like
Thousand-eyed Indra himself –
The Siddhas
The Cārāṇas
And humans

65 And gods
All offered him
Pūjā-praise.
They marvelled
At the deeds
Of Bhūriśravas.
Your soldiers debated variously,

66 Saying:
"The Vṛṣṇi hero Sātyaki
Is not to blame.
What had to happen, happened.
No need to get angry.
Anger leads to misery.

67 He was doomed to die
At the hands of Sātyaki.
The Creator willed it so.
No point thinking otherwise."

68 Sātyaki shouted:
"You Kaurava hypocrites!
You don the mask of dharma
And you mouth words of dharma!
'Don't kill him! Don't kill him!'
That's what you said.

69 Where was your dharma
When you cornered
Subhadrā's weaponless boy Abhimanyu
And killed him in cold blood?

70 Yes, I was proud –
But I had vowed
That anyone who abused me
Or threw me down
And kicked me
On the battlefield –

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71 I would not spare
Such an enemy,
Not even if he took
The vow of silence
And became a *muni.*
I had not lost my arms,
I could see with my eyes,

72 Yet you thought
I was dead.
It was foolish of you.
O bull-brave Kauravas!
I killed Bhūriśravas.
I took my revenge.
I did right.

73 What Pārtha-Arjuna did –
Lopping off the sword-wielding arm
Of Bhūriśravas
To save me – well,
All he did was
To cheat me of my chance
To win that glory.

74 What will be,
will be.
The hand of fate
does all.
Bhūriśravas died
fighting a war.
What adharma
have I done?

75 Long ago, Vālmīki
chanted this śloka:
'You say, Hanumān, again and again,
On no account should women be slain."

76 My reply to that is:
'Always and ever strike your foe
In such a manner that brings him woe.'"

77 Sātyaki finished
(continued Sañjaya)
Mahārāja,
The bull-brave Kauravas
kept silent.
In their minds
They offered pūjā-praise
to Bhūriśravas.

78 Not one of them
approved the slaughter
of Bhūriśravas –
The hero purified
by chanting mantras
The hero who gave away
thousands of gold coins
The hero who sat meditating
like a *muni* in a forest.

79 The head
of boon-granting Bhūriśravas –
graced with lovely
dark-blue hair –
graced with eyes
pink as a pigeon's –
The severed head
of Bhūriśravas
looked like the severed head
of a horse
placed on the fire-altar
during the ritual
of the Aśvamedha
Horse Sacrifice.

80 Purified by the mahā-battle's weapons,
Boon-granting and boon-deserving Bhūriśravas
Discarded his body
And with the strength of his dharma
Ascended to the supreme upper realms
of felicity.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FORTY-FOUR

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:
"As he promised Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
Brave Sātyaki
Crossed my oceanic army,
Baffling even Droṇa,
Rādhā's son Karṇa,
Vikarṇa and Kṛtavarman.

2 How was it then
That he was frustrated
And felled by the valour
Of the Kaurava Bhūriśravas?"

3 Listen, O rājā
(said Sañjaya)
To the stories
Of the births in the distant past
Of Śini's grandson
And Bhūriśravas.
This will clear your puzzlement.

4 Ṛṣi Atri's son was Soma.
Soma's son was Budha.
Budha's son was Pururavas
Whose radiance equalled Mahendra-Indra's.

5 Pururava's son was Āyu.
Āyu's son was Nahuṣa.
Nahuṣa's son rājā Yayāti
Was respected even by divine ṛṣis.

6 By his wife Devayānī,
Yayāti's eldest son was Yadu.
In the Yadu dynasty
Was born Devamīḍha,

7 Whose son was Śūra,
The glory of the three worlds.
Śūra's son was finest-of-men Śauri,
Famed as the mahā-glorious Vasudeva.

8 Bow-expert Śūra was as proficient
In war-skills as Kārtavīrya-Arjuna.
O king, of his lineage and equalling him
In valour was Śini.

9 Around this time, O rājā,
Was held the svayaṁvara
Of Devakī the daughter
Of mahā-ātmaned Devaka,
To which all the Kṣatriyas came.

10 King Śini defeated the Kṣatriyas
At that svayaṁvara and placed
Devaka's daughter-devī in his chariot,
Intending to marry her to Vasudeva.

11 O king, O bull-brave hero,
Seeing Devakī in the chariot
Of Śini of the Śūra dynasty,
Mahā-valiant Somadatta was furious.

12 O rājā, O bull-brave hero,
A fierce, fascinating fist-fight
Took place
Between the mahā-powerful kings
Śini and Somadatta –
A duel that lasted
Half a day.

13 Sini gripped Somadatta
And hurled him on the ground.
Raising his sword,
Śini held Somadatta's hair
And kicked him.

14 Thousands of assembled rājās
Watched the duel.
Out of pity,
Śini released Somadatta,
Saying, "Live."

15 O gracious monarch!
Humiliated Somadatta
Driven by anger
Began to propitiate
Mahādeva-Śiva

16 To seek his boon.
Finest-of-boon-granting-gods
Mahādeva-Śiva was pleased
And said, "What do you desire?"
Rājā Somadatta asked this boon:

17 "Bhagavan!
Revered one!
Give me a son
Who will fell Śini's son
In the midst of thousands of rājās
And kick him as he lies
Prostrate on the ground."

18 O lord of the earth!
Hearing this prayer of Somadatta,
Śiva shook his head.
"No, this cannot be, O king.
Śini has already done tapasyā
And worshipped me.
In the three worlds

19 There is none
Who can kill him –
I have granted him this boon.
But let me see.
Your supplication also
Will not be fruitless.

20 On the field of battle
Your son
Will make Śini's grandson
Unconscious,
But kill him he cannot,
For Śini's grandson
Is protected by Krishna.

21 I am Krishna.
There is no difference
Between Krishna and me.
What I have said,
Will be."
Saying this,
the god vanished.

22 That was the boon
That gave to Somadatta
His *dakṣiṇā*-granting son
Bhūriśravas
Who threw down Śini's grandson
On the battlefield.

23 Not only that –
He kicked Sātyaki –
With all the warriors as witnesses.
Rājā,
You asked me why,
I have told you why.

24 Sātyaki of the Sātvatas
Cannot be defeated
In battle
Even by the finest bull-brave warrior.
The Vṛṣṇi warriors
Shoot with perfect accuracy;
They are expert
In all modes of warfare.

25 They can defeat
Gods and Dānavas and Gandharvas.
They are never at a loss.
They are supremely self-confident.
They do not wait
For help from others.

26 *Prabhu*! Lord! Bull-brave Bharata!
There has not been
There is not now
There will never be
in this world
Anyone to equal
The valour of the Vṛṣṇis.

27 They never criticise
their kin,
They obey
their elders.
Neither gods
Nor anti-gods
Nor Gandharvas
Nor Yakṣas
Nor Rākṣasas

28 Can defeat the Vṛṣṇis –
How can humans?
They do not covet the possessions
Of Brahmins, gurus and kinsmen;

29 They protect all of these
In times of difficulty.
They are affluent
They are not arrogant
They respect Brahmins
They are truth-speakers.

30 They do not envy
the prosperity of others
They are ready to help
the weak and needy
They always show reverence
to the gods
They are in control
of their senses
They are charitable
they do not praise themselves.

31 O king, this Vṛṣṇi-*cakra* of heroes
can never be defeated.
The Meru mountain can be lifted,
the *makara*-teeming ocean crossed,

32 But the congregation
of Vṛṣṇi warriors
cannot be defeated.
And so, *prabhu*-lord,
I hope that my words
have cleared your doubts.
O Kaurava rājā,
yours is the mahā-blame
for starting this war.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FORTY-FIVE

1 "With the Kaurava Bhūriśravas killed,"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"tell me, Sañjaya,
what happened on the battlefield."

2 O descendant of Bharata
(Sañjaya replied),
With the departure of Bhūriśravas
To the other world,
Mahā-muscled Arjuna
Urged
Vāsudeva-Krishna
With the following request:

3 "Krishna,
Drive my horses swiftly
To where rājā Jayadratha is.
Puṇḍarikākṣa-Krishna!
Lotus-eyed one!
I hear that he
Is learned in the three dharmas.

4 Help me
Fulfil my vow, O faultless one!
O mahā-muscled one,
The sun is beginning to set.

5 O tiger-among-men!
It is a giant task
I mean to accomplish.
The Kaurava mahā-chariot-heroes
Are protecting Jayadratha.

6 Krishna, drive the horses
In such a way
That I can kill Jayadratha
Before the sun sets."

7 Expert equestrain mahā-muscled Krishna
Drove the silver-white horses
Swiftly towards Jayadratha's chariot
To get him killed.

8 Mahārāja,
Seeing Arjuna,
Whose arrows never failed
To hit their target,
Speeding like an arrow
Towards Jayadratha,
The finest of your warriors
Rushed to intercept him.

9 Duryodhana
Karṇa
Vṛṣasena
The Madra-rājā Śalya
Aśvatthāman
And Kṛpa
And the Sindhu-ruler Jayadratha
Prepared for battle.

10 Seeing the Sindhu-ruler
In front of him,
The eyes
Of Bībhatsu-Arjuna,
Hideous-deed-doer Arjuna,
Blazed with wrath
As if to reduce his foe
To ashes.

11 Seeing Arjuna speeding
To kill Jayadratha,
Rājā Duryodhana
Said to Rādhā's son Karṇa:

12 "Vaikartana-Karṇa!
Flesh-armoured one!
Mahā-ātmaned one!
The time has come to fight,
To show your valour.
Take whatever steps are necessary
To prevent Arjuna
From killing Jayadratha.

13 Brave warrior!
The day is ending.
Not much time is left.
Fire your swarms of arrows
And cripple your foe!
O finest of heroes!
Karṇa!
We must have victory
Before the day ends.

14 If we can protect
The ruler of the Sindhus
Till the sun sets,
The vow of Kaunteya-Arjuna
Will remain unfulfilled,
And he will immolate himself.

15 O honour-bestower!
With Arjuna no more
On this earth,
His brothers and followers
Will be quickly eliminated.

16 Karṇa!
With the Pāṇḍava removed,
With that thorn plucked out,
The whole world
Is ours to enjoy –
Its mountains
Its forests
Its gardens.

[VII:145:17-22]

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17 O honour-bestower!
Fate has clouded
The mind of Pārtha-Arjuna.
His judgment is blurred.
Without thinking
If it's practical or not,
He vowed to kill Jayadratha.

18 It seems to me, Karṇa,
Diadem-decked Arjuna
Prepared his own doom
When he pledged
To kill Jayadratha.

19 How is it possible,
Rādhā's son,
For Phālguna-Arjuna to kill
The king of the Sindhus
Before the sun sets,
So long as an invincible warrior
Like you is with us?

20 How can Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Kill Jayadratha
Who is protected
On the field of battle
By mahā-ātmaned Kṛpa
And the Madra-rājā Śalya?

21 With I and Duḥśāsana
And Droṇa's Son Aśvatthāman
Protecting Jayadratha,
How does Bibhatsu-Arjuna,
Doer-of-heinous-deeds,
Hope to kill Jayadratha?
He is tempting fate.

22 O honour-bestower!
Many brave heroes
Are involved in this mission.
The sun is starting to set.
I have grave doubts
Pārtha-Arjuna will be able
To even come near Jayadratha.

23 Karṇa!
Reinforced by me
And other brave mahā-chariot-heroes,
By Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
By the ruler of Madra
And by Kṛpa,

24 Fight Pārtha-Arjuna
To the height
Of your might!"
O gracious monarch,
Rādhā's son Karṇa
Heard these words
Of your son,

25 And replied
To Duryodhana,
The finest of the Kauravas:
"The brilliant bowman,
Straight-shooting brave Bhīma

26 Has wounded me
Grievously
All over my body
With his arrow-showers.
O honour-bestower!
I think it is best
I stay where I am.

27 Not a single limb
In my body
Is free
From piercing pain.
But I'll fight on
With all my strength
For I have promised
To lay down my life for you.

28 I will do what I can
To stop Arjuna
The finest of the Pāṇḍavas
From killing
The Sindhu ruler.
So long as I carry on
Shooting my sharp arrows,

29 The ambidexterous warrior
Savyasācī-Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Will not be able to harm
The Sindhu ruler.
The duty
That a friend with bhakti
Has for his friend,

30 That duty is mine
For you. O Kaurava scion,
I will discharge that duty
On the field
Today
By protecting the Sindhu ruler.
Victory is in the hands of fate.

31 As for victory, I repeat,
Mahārāja,
That is in the hands of fate.
I will depend
On my manliness today,
And Arjuna,

32 O tiger-among-men,
Will be my target.
As for victory,
That is in the hands of fate.
O finest of the Kauravas!
Today
The battle between me
And Pārtha-Arjuna,

33 This horrendous
horripilating battle,
Will be witnessed
On the battlefield
By the soldiers
of both sides.

34 While Karṇa
And the Kaurava Duryodhana
Were talking
On the battlefield,
Arjuna began discharging
His sharp deadly arrows
Which wrought havoc
Among his foes
Famed for never retreating,

35 Foes with arms
As thick as spiked bludgeons
Or like trunks of elephants.
The deadly sharp arrows
Of the mahā-muscled hero
Decapitated countless warriors.

36 Horses' necks lay scattered
Beside shattered chariot axles.
Blood-drenched horse-riders
Wielding *prāsa*-darts
And *tomara*-lances –

37 Heinous-deed-doer
Bibhatsu-Arjuna
Cut them to pieces
With razor-tipped arrows.
Massive elephants and horses
Tumbled and fell;

38 Flags
Umbrellas
Bows
Chowrie-whisks
Littered the field,
Side by side
With heads of warriors.
Like a fierce fire
Consuming dry grass,

39 Pārtha-Arjuna
Incinerated your warriors
On the blood-soaked field.
Mercilessly killing
Countless numbers of your warriors,

40 The truly illustrious
Impossible-to-vanquish hero
Attacked the Sindhu ruler.
Protected by Bhīma
And the Sātvata Sātyaki,
Heinous-deed-doer
Bībhatsu-Arjuna

41 Flamed on the field,
O finest of Bharatas,
Like a ferocious fire.
Seeing Arjuna standing
Firm in his valour
On the battlefield,

42 The bull-brave warriors
And brilliant bowmen
Of your army
Became furious.
Duryodhana and Karṇa
Vṛṣasena
And the Madra-rājā

43 Aśvatthāman
Kṛpa
And the Sindhu ruler –
All of them together
Swiftly surrounded
Diadem-decked Kirīṭin-Arjuna.

44 Brilliant-in-war-skills
Pārtha-Arjuna
Seemed to dance
Atop his chariot
As he twanged his bowstring;
Though trapped on all sides
By heroic foes,

45 He looked fierce
Like the god of death
Antaka himself.
Intent on killing
Acyuta-Krishna and Arjuna,
The Kauravas drove ahead
Of the Sindhu-ruler,

46 Hoping the sun
Would set soon.
The sun was now
A flaming mass of red.
Bending their bows
With sinewy serpent-arms,
The Kaurava warriors

47 Riddled Phālguna-Arjuna
With arrows that streamed
Like the rays of the sun –
Hundreds of arrows.
However, the valiant warrior
Diadem-decked Arjuna,
Invincible in battle,

48 Splintered those arrows
Into two or three
Or eight fragments each.
Displaying his valour,
The lion-tail-emblemed Kṛpa,
Śāradratī's son,

49 O rājā,
Rushed forward
To block Arjuna.
He wounded Pārtha-Arjuna
With ten arrows,
And Vāsudeva-Krishna
With seven;

50 And to protect
The Sindhu-ruler,
He stood in the path
Of the chariot.
All the Kaurava
Mahā-chariot-heroes –

51 The finest among them –
Made a circle
Of impenetrable defence
Around him,
Stretching their bows,
And shooting volleys
Of fierce arrows,

52 As ordered by your son
For the protection
Of the Sindhu-ruler.
We witnessed the valour
Of the muscular arms
Of Pārtha-Arjuna,

53 The wondrous vigour
Of the Gāṇḍīva-bow.
Repulsing with his weapons
The weapons of Kṛpa
And Aśvatthāman
The son of Droṇa,

54 He wounded
His attackers
With ten arrows each.
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
With five arrows,
And Vṛṣasena
With seeven arrows,

55 Duryodhana with twenty,
Karṇa and Śalya,
With three arrows each,
Wounded Arjuna.
Targeting Arjuna,

56 They roared repeatedly;
Shaking their bows,
They prevented Arjuna
From advancing
By surrounding him
In a complete circle,
A maṇḍala of chariots,

57 Tightly grouped.
They waited
For the sun
To set soon –
All the mahā-chariot-heroes.
They shook their bows
And hurled at him
Roaring war-cries, arrows,

58 Like clouds deluging
A mountain with piercing
Hail and rain.
O rājā!
With what divine
Mahā-weapons

59 Those heroes
With arms as massive
As spiked clubs
Attacked Arjuna!
Frustrating most of
Your splendid warriors,
The strongest-
Of-the-strong,

60 The invincible,
The truly illustrious Arjuna
Attacked the Sindhu-ruler.
O Bharata rājā!
Karṇa succeeded
In blocking Arjuna with shafts

61 While Bhīma
And the Sātvata Sātyaki
Watched.
On the field of battle,
With ten arrows,
Pārtha-Arjuna,

62 The mahā-muscled hero,
Wounded Karṇa
The Sūta's son
While the soldiers watched.
O gracious monarch!
The Sātvata Sātyaki
Wounded Karṇa
With three arrows,

63 To which Bhīma
Added another three,
And Pārthā-Arjuna
With seven more arrows
Wounded Karṇa,
Who retaliated with sixty.

64 O rājā!
Karṇa battled alone
With countless warriors.
*Māriṣa*! O gracious monarch!
We watched spellbound
The Sūta's son Karṇa,

65 Single-handed,
Blazing with anger,
Block the advance
Of three chariot-heroes
On the battlefield.
But mahā-muscled
Phālguna-Arjuna
Blocked Vaikartana-Karṇa,

66 Wounding the vital
Parts of his body
With a hundred arrows.
The Sūta's son,
Valiant blood-drenched Karṇa,
Blood streaming down his body,

67 Struck heroic
Phālguna-Arjuna
With fifty arrows.
Arjuna could not tolerate
The incredible dexterity
Of Karṇa's bowmanship.

68 So Pārtha-Arjuna
Retaliated swiftly
With nine arrows
That sliced Karṇa's bow;
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Also wounded him
In the chest.

69 The Sūta's son
Immediately
Fitted another bow
And shrouded
Pāṇḍava Arjuna
With a massive volley
Of eight thousand arrows.

70 That incomparable shower
Of arrows
From Karṇa's bow
Was scattered
By a counter-shower
From Pārtha-Arjuna's bow –
Like a strong wind
Scattering a swarm of insects.

71 Displaying his dexterity
In front of the warriors
Of the opposing armies,
Arjuna shrouded Karṇa
With arrow-showers.

72 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
Excelling in swiftness
When swiftness was needed,
Shot an arrow
As dazzling as the sun,
Motivated by his desire
To kill Karṇa.

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73 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Saw the shaft
Speed swiftly
And sliced it midway
With a sharp
Half-moon arrow.
It fell on the ground.

74 Slayer-of-foes Karṇa,
Eager to equal
The feats of his foe,
Retaliated
By shrouding Phālguna-Arjuna
Again
With thousands of arrows.

75 Snorting like two bulls,
The two human lions,
The two mahā-chariot-heroes
Obscured
The sky itself
With their straight-speeding arrows.

76 Blocked from sight
By clouds of arrows
They screamed
They wounded each other
They challenged each other:
"Karṇa!
I'm Pārtha! Arjuna!
Wait!"
"Phālguna! Arjuna!
I'm Karṇa!
Wait!"

77 Roaring
Taunting
Screaming
Manoeuvring
Hurling word-arrows
They fought
Their agile
And beautiful
Duel.

78 The warriors
Of both camps
Stood
And watched.
Praised by
Siddhas
Cāraṇas
And Pannagas

79 They battled on
Bent
On killing each other,
O mahārāja.
Then, O rājā,
Duryodhana ordered his soldiers:

80 "Reinforce
Rādhā's son Karṇa
At all costs.
He promised me,
'I will not return
Without killing Arjuna.'"

81 O rājā,
In the meantime,
Witnessing Karṇa's valour,
Targeting Karṇa's four horses,
Pulling his bow-string
Ear-taut,

82 With the aim
Of despatching
All four of them
To the realm of the spirits,
White-horse-charioted Arjuna
Shot them down,
And with a *bhalla*-arrow
Toppled Karṇa's charioteer
From his seat.

83 Before your son's very eyes
He confounded Karṇa
With a deluge of arrows.
Horse-less, charioteer-less,
Arrow-pierced Karṇa,

84 Caught
In that arrow-net,
Was completely bewildered.
Seeing him unchərioted,
The charioteer
Of Aśvatthāman

85 Drove near him.
He climbed
Into Aśvatthāman's chariot
And resumed his attack
On Arjuna.
The Madra-rājā Śalya

86 Śāradvat-Kṛpa
Targeted Vasudeva-Krishna
With twenty arrows,
And Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
He wounded
With twelve.

87 Mahārāja,
The Sindhu-rājā with four,
And Vṛṣasena with seven arrows,
Harassed Krishna
And Pāṇḍava Arjuna.

88 Kuntī's son
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Retaliated
With sixty-four arrows
Wounding Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
And a hundred arrows
For the Madra-rājā Śalya.

89 The Sindhu-ruler
Jayadratha
Was attacked with ten,
Vṛṣasena
With three,
Kṛpa with twenty.
After wounding them,
Arjuna screamed his war-cry.

90 Seeing this,
Your warriors,
Eager to nullify the vow
Of ambidexterous
Savyasācī-Arjuna,
Swooped upon him
In a group.

91 Arjuna terrorised
The armies of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
By invoking
And using all around him
The Vāruṇa-weapon
But the Kauravas re-grouped
Their splendid chariots
And rained arrows at Pāṇḍu's son.

92 Eager to recover the kingdom,
Remembering wrongs and injustices
Perpetrated over the twelve years,
Diadem-decked prince Arjuna obscured the sky
With the Gāṇḍīva-shot arrows.

93 O Bharata descendant!
The battle continued –
A horrendous, confounding battle –
But diadem-decked Arjuna
Kept calm
And relentlessly
Released his arrow-showers.

94 The sky
Was a dazzle
With shooting stars.
Flesh-eating
Ravens
Swooped
And feasted
On corpses of warriors.
Seething with anger
Diadem-decked Arjuna
Continued to slaughter his foes
With arrows shot
From his yellow-stringed Gāṇḍīva.

95 Mahā-famed
Foe-annihilating
Diadem-decked Arjuna
Neutralised the arrows
Of his enemies
With arrows from his massive bow,
Killing their horses
And routing
The excellent elephant-riders
Of the Kaurava forces.

96 So many!
So many fearful kings!
So many lords of men
On that battlefield!
So many
Wielding iron clubs and maces
And swords and darts and spears!
Advancing with weapons
Against Arjuna
The son of Pṛthā-Kuntī!

97 Bending his bow
The excellent Gāṇḍīva
With his mighty arms –
A bow as splendid
As the bow of Mahendra-Indra,
A bow whose twang
Was like clouds roaring
At the end of a yuga –
Arjuna slaughtered your warriors,
Increasing the population
Of the realm of Yama,
God of death.

98 Mutilated
Decapitated
Eliminated
Chariot-heroes
Elephant-warriors
Foot-soldiers and mahā-bowmen
Added to the population
Of Yama's realm.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FORTY-SIX

1 Hearing the fearful twang
of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's bow,
distinct and clear like the roar
of Antaka, god of doom,
or the thunderbolt of Śakra-Indra
(continued Sañjaya),

2 Your warriors, O rājā, were terror-struck.
At the end of a yuga, ocean-waves lashing,

3 Fish and *makaras* thrashing,
tempest-tossed –
such was their state.
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna on the field

4 Displayed his brilliant skill
With weapons of war.
Mahārāja, when Pāṇḍava Arjuna
Pulled out an arrow,
When he fitted it,

5 When stretched the bow-string,
When fired it –
It was impossible to make out.
Infuriated maha-muscled Arjuna
Invoked the fearful Indra-missile,

6 O mahārāja,
In front of the entire Kaurava army.
Charged with celestial mantras,
Arrows from that missile,

7 Flame-tipped arrows,
Hundreds upon hundreds
Of terrifying arrows,
Suddenly materialised.
Fired with bow-string pulled ear-taut,
Those sun-bright, flame-like arrows

8 Enveloped the sky
Like swarms of meteors.
A blinding spectacle!
The arrow-darkness created
By the Kauravas,

9 Impossible to disperse
Even in one's imagination,
Was scattered by Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
With his mantra-charged arrows
On the field of battle,

10 Like the morning sun
Dispelling the darkness of night.
With his blazing arrows
He sucked dry
Your soldiers' lives,

11 Like the sun in summer
With his fiery power
Evaporating pools and ponds.
Then, celestial-weapons-expert Arjuna
Released more arrows

12 Which obscured the enemy ranks
Like sun-rays
Covering the earth.
Still more arrows
Of fierce intensity

13 Entered the hearts of his foes
As if they were dear friends.
And those valiant warriors
Of yours
Who happened to be facing Arjuna

14 Fell
Like insects
Consumed by fire.
Exterminating the lives
And the fame of his foes,

15 Pārtha-Arjuna
Ruled the battlefield
As if he was Death personified.
Diadem-decked heads,
Huge *aṅgada*-adorned arms,

16 And ears graced
With beautiful ear-rings
Were sliced by his arrows.
*Tomara*-wielding arms of elephant-riders,
*Prāsa*-wielding arms of horsemen,

17 Shield-holding arms of foot-soldiers,
Bow-brandishing arms of chariot-heroes
Whip-flailing arms of charioteers –
Were lopped off by Pāṇḍava Arjuna.

18 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Was a massive fire
With flame-tipped arrows
Speeding from him
Like countless dazzling rays.

19 Ensconced in his chariot
That bull-among-men
That finest of weapons-experts
That skilled-in-all-weapons hero
Dazzled
Like the rājā-of-the-gods Indra!

20 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
That master of mahā-weapons
Was a feast for the eyes
As he twanged his bow
And seemed to dance in his chariot.

21 Like the torrid sun
In the sky
At high noon,
Was Arjuna.
They tried, the lords of the earth,
But could not look at him –

22 Radiant and fierce Kirīṭin-Arjuna
With fearful weapons!
He looked like a monsoon cloud
Rain-swollen and rainbow-wielding.

23 In that flood of destruction
Created by the mahā-weapons
Of Jiṣṇu-Arjuna,
Bull-like heroes perished
Drowning in a dreadful ocean.

24 Smashed faces
Mutilated bodies
Chopped arms and legs
Arms without hands
Hands without fingers

25 Trunk-less elephants
Tusk-battered elephants
Rider-less horses
Neck-less steeds
Splintered chariots

26 Disembowelled bodies
With bleeding entrails
Leg-less bodies
Spasmodically writhing
In hundreds of thousands –

27 The playground of Rudra-Śiva
Toying with the lives
Of humans and beasts.
*Kṣura*-sliced elephant-trunks
Littered the field like snakes.

28 It was the killing field
Of Pārtha-Arjuna,
The killing field of Death,
A field, O mighty ruler,
To terrorise cowards.

29 A lotus-pond field
Strewn with the lotus-
Lovely heads of dead warriors,
Like so many flowers.
Headgear and crowns
*Keyūra*-bracelets
*Aṅgada*-armlets
Ear-rings

30 Golden coats-of-mail
Horse-trappings
Elephant-caparisons
And diadems
In hundreds
Strewn
On the battlefield –

31 The earth
Looked as resplendent
As a glittering bride.
Fat and marrow
    the mud
Blood
    the current

32 Limbs and bones
deep-drowned
Hair
the moss and weeds
heads and arms
the stones

33 Colourful flags and pennants
Umbrellas and bows
the waves
Elephant-corpses floating

34 Horse-corpses clogging
Chariots the rafts
Blocked by wheels-yokes-axles-*kūbaras*

35 Lances-*śaktis*-axes-arrows
the snakes
Crows and *kaṅka*-herons
the *nakra*-crocodiles
Jackals
the *makara* sea-monsters

36 Vultures
other fierce sea-beasts
Spirits and ghosts and goblins
thousands of them
dancing

37 Sweeping away corpses
screaming
yelling
horrendous –
the river of death Vaitaraṇī itself.

38 Such a river flowed on the field,
Striking terror in the hearts of cowards.
Seeing the prowess of Arjuna
Appearing like Antaka the god of doom,

39 A panic like never before
Gripped the Kaurava warriors.
Pāṇḍava Arjuna, neutralising
His enemy's weapons with his own,

40 Performing cruel karma,
Became the cruel one.
O rājā, leaving behind
The great chariot-heroes,
Arjuna advanced unopposed.

41 He shone like the sun
at high noon.
None on the battlefield
could look at him.

42 And the arrows
that sped
from the Gāṇḍīva bow
of mahā-ātmaned Arjuna
appeared like *haṁsa*-swans
sailing in the sky.

43 Baffling all the weapons
of his enemies,
Arjuna continued his career
of cruel karma.

44 Eager to eliminate Jayadratha,
Arjuna sped through the chariot-ranks,
Confounding your warriors, O rājā,
With his *nārāca*-arrows.
He who had protection-granting Krishna
As his charioteer –

45 That Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
Handsome hero, drove swiftly
Through the field.
Mahā-ātmaned Arjuna,
Valiant warrior,

46 Shot hundreds and thousands
Of sky-shrouding arrows.
Selecting
Stringing
And shooting

47 Became a single motion
With Kaunteya-Arjuna.
All the directions, O rājā,
Were shrouded. The chariot-heroes

48 Kept at bay, Kuntī's son Arjuna
Treated them like *kadamba*-flowers,
And swiftly drove towards Jayadratha,
Wounding him
With sixtyfour depressed-knot arrows.

49 When our warriors
Saw Pāṇḍava Arjuna speeding
Towards the Sindhu-rājā,
They despaired of saving Jayadratha's life
And stopped fighting.

50 *Prabhu!* Lord!
Whichever of our warriors
Dared to confront Pāṇḍava Arjuna
Had his body pierced
With volleys
Of life-threatening arrows.

51 The mahā-chariot-hero Arjuna,
Most valiant of warriors,
With fire-fatal arrows
Populated the battlefield
With beheaded soldiers.

52 O Indra-among-rājās!
Devastating the ranks
Of your *caturaṅga* four-fold army,
Kuntī's son Arjuna
Raced towards Jayadratha.

53 He contained Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
With fifty arrows
And Vṛṣasena with three.
He was considerate towards Kṛpa,
Blocking him with nine arrows.

54 Wounding Śalya with sixteen,
Karṇa with thirty-two,
Arjuna afflicted the Sindhu-rājā
With sixty-four arrows,
And screamed his leonine war-cry.

55 The Sindhu-ruler,
Oppressed by the arrows,
Straight-flying, smooth-ribbed arrows,
Arrows as fierce
As roused venomous snakes,

57 Pulled his shafts ear-taut,
And shot them at the chariot
Of Phālguna-Arjuna.
Wounding Govinda-Krishna with three,

58 Their horses with eight,
With one he shredded
The war-flag of Arjuna.
But Arjuna succeeded in repulsing
The Sindhu-ruler's arrows,

59 And simultaneously
With two arrows he cut the head
Of the Sindhu-ruler's charioteer
And shredded
His intricately decorated war-flag.

60 Ripped apart by the arrows
Of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
The boar-emblemed flag of Jayadratha
Fluttered from the sliced staff
On the ground.

61 O rājā! The sun
Was speedily beginning to set.
Janārdana-Krishna
Said to Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna:

62 "Mahā-muscled Arjuna,
Son of Pṛthā-Kuntī!
Fearing for his life,
The Sindhu-ruler has surrounded himself
With six
Of the finest mahā-chariot-heroes.

Transcreated by P. Lal

63 O bull-among-men! Arjuna!
Without routing those six chariot-heroes
On the battlefield,
You cannot kill the Sindhu-ruler,
No matter how hard you try.

64 Let me use my yoga
To shroud the sun,
So that Sindhu-rājā alone
Thinks that the sun has set.

65 *Prabhu*! Powerful one!
That despicable man will exult,
Thinking he is safe
And your death certain.
And he will emerge from his cover.

66 O finest of the Kuru clan!
That is your chance!
Strike him then!
Don't forget your duty!
Don't start believing
That the sun has set."

67 Heinous-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna
Said to Keśava-Krishna:
"So be it."
So the shrouding of the sun
Was created by Krishna,

68 Hari-Krishna, Yogī-Krishna,
Lord-of-yogīs Krishna,
By means of his yoga.
The darkness devised by Krishna
Made the sun seem to set.

69 Your warriors exulted,
O ruler of men,
Thinking Pārtha-Arjuna was doomed.
So delighted were they, O rājā,
They did not even care to gaze
In the direction of the sun.

70 Only rājā Jayadratha repeatedly
Kept looking up at the sun.
Noticing the Sindhu-rājā repeatedly
Glancing sun-ward,

71 Krishna again
Said to Dhanañjaya-Arjuna:
"See, the Sindhu-lord
Keeps staring at the sun,

72 Forgetting his fear of you.
O finest of the Bharatas!
O mahā-muscled one!
Now is the time
To kill the scoundrel!

73 Keep your promise!
Lop off his head!"
Acting on the advice
Of Keśava-Krishna,
The puissant son of Pāṇḍu

74 Recommenced his attack
On your warriors
With sun-bright and fire-bright shafts.
He wounded Kṛpa
With twenty arrows,
Karṇa with fifty,

75 And Duryodhana and Śalya
With Six each,
Vṛṣasena with eight,
And the Sindhu-ruler with sixty.

76 O rājā! Arjuna,
The mahā-muscled son of Pāṇḍu,
Shot swarms of arrows at your warriors,
And attacked Jayadratha.

77 Seeing him advancing
Like a lolling tongue of fire,
The protectors of Jayadratha
Were assailed with fears.

78 Mahārāja!
Your victory-seeking warriors
Began a deluge of arrows on Arjuna,
Son of Pākaśāsana-Indra.

79 Showered with arrows,
Kuntī's son Kuru-nandana Arjuna,
The mahā-muscled, undefeated hero,
Was infuriated.

80 That tiger-among-men,
Pākaśāsani-Arjuna,
Son of ignorance-destroying Indra,
Spread an arrow-net of destruction
Over your warriors.

81 O rājā!
Afflicted by his offensive,
Your frightened warriors abandoned
The Sindhu-ruler and fled,
One by one, not even in twos.

82 We witnessed the marvellous valour
Of the son of Kuntī –
A mahā-valour
Never seen before
And never to be seen again.

83 Like Rudra-Śiva slaying creatures,
Arjuna slaughtered
Elephants and elephant-riders,
Horses and horsemen,
Chariots and chariot-riders.

84 O lord of men!
I did not see any elephant,
Any horse, any human
Not targeted by Arjuna
On that battlefield.

85 Blinding dust and darkness!
Confused warriors!
So bewildered they could not
Recognise each other.

86 O Bharata ruler!
Their vital parts pierced
By Pārthā-Arjuna's arrows,
They shuffled, they tottered,
They tumbled, they perished.

87 In that mahā-massacre
Of creatures,
In that calamitous carnage
On the battlefield,
From which
There was no escape,

88 The earth
Became a sea of blood,
The furious wind
Settled the gory dust
On the blood-drenched ground,

89 The wheels of chariots
Stuck in the bloody mire,
Up to their naves.
O rājā! Thousands
Of musth elephants, huge beasts,

90 Thousands of them,
Their riders killed,
Their bodies mutilated,
Shrieking and trumpeting,
Fled, trampling your warriors.

91 O rājā! Lord of men!
Rider-less horses and foot-soldiers,
Pierced by the arrows
Of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Fled the field in fear.

92 Dishevelled hair
Shattered armour
Blood oozing from wounds
The warriors fled
They fled the field in terror.

93 Some lay unmoving
As if stuck in the field.
Many warriors
Hid themselves
Behind elephant-corpses.

94 In this way,
O rājā,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna routed
Your warriors and attacked
The Sindhu-rājā's protectors.

95 Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna blanketed
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
Kṛpa, Karṇa, Śalya, Vṛṣasena,
And Suyodhana-Duryodhana
With sharp arrow-nets.

96 O rājā!
Such was Arjuna's swiftness
You could not make out
When the arrow was selected,
When fitted, pulled, and released.

97 His enemies saw only
The bow pulled fully taut
In a maṇḍala-circle
And the showers of arrows
Shrouding all the directions.

98 Slicing the bows
Of Karṇa and Vṛṣasena,
Arjuna with a single *bhalla*-arrow
Toppled Śalya's charioteer
From his vehicle.

99 Finest-of-heroes Arjuna
Fired arrows which severely wounded
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
And Kṛpa,
Nephew and uncle.

100 Having routed the mahā-chariot-heroes
Of your army in this way,
Pāṇḍava-Arjuna selected
An awesome, fire-fierce arrow.

101 Mantra-charged
That celestial shaft
Dazzled like Indra's thunderbolt.
It could withstand
Any counter-weapon.
It was venerated
With perfumes and flower-garlands.

102 Revering it
As one should a thunderbolt-missile,
Arjuna, the delight of the Kauravas,
Swiftly fitted it to his Gāṇḍīva.

103 O king!
Even as he fitted
That fire-fatal arrow,
A mahā-uproar reverberated
In the sky and inter-space.

104 Janārdana-Krishna
Said to Arjuna:
"Dhanañjaya-Arjuna! Quick!
Decapitate
The rascally Sindhu-ruler!

105 The sun is about to set
In the high hills.
Listen to what I tell you
Regarding the killing
Of Jayadratha.

106 Jayadratha's father Bṛhadkṣatra
Was a renowned ruler.
It was after a long time
That he was able
To get Jayadratha as his son.

107 At the time of his birth,
A cloud-sonorous, *dundubhi*-drum-deep,
Disembodied voice declared
To Bṛhadkṣatra
Regarding foe-conquering Jayadratha:

108 'O Indra-among-humans!
This son of yours
Will equal the lunar and solar races
In lineage, character, self-control
And other guṇas.

109 He will be honoured
As the finest of Kṣatriyas.
Heroes will revere him.
But, on the battlefield,
A Kṣatriya bull-brave hero,

110 An enemy of his,
Will angrily cut off his head.'
The forever-victorious
Sindhu-rājā Bṛhadkṣatra
Heard this,

111 Pondered gravely and,
Out of love for his son,
Summoned his family,
Friends and well-wishers, and said:
'Who does this fierce deed

112 Making my son's head fall
On the field of battle, –
His own head will shatter
Into a hundred pieces.
There is no doubt of this.'

113 Saying this,
He installed Jayadratha
On the throne,
And went to the forest
To practise tapasyā.

114 Ape-emblemed Arjuna!
Bṛhadkṣatra is at present
Engaged in profound penance
In the territory
Known as Samantapañcaka.

115 Sever Jayadratha's head
In this gruesome clash
With your celestial weapon
Which can perform
Such a wondrous-vicious deed

116 And hurl the ear-ringed head
Of the Sindhu-lord
In the lap of Bṛhadkṣatra.
O scion of Bharata! After all,
You are the brother
Of Añjana's son Bhīma.

117 If you let Jayadratha's head
Touch the ground,
Your own head will crack
Into a hundred pieces.
There is no doubt of this.

118 O finest of the Kurus!
Rājā Bṛhadkṣatra is immersed
In tapasyā.
Use the celestial weapon
Without his knowing.

119 Son of Vāsava-Indra!
Nothing in the three worlds
Is beyond you. There is nothing
You cannot accomplish."

120 Arjuna
Heard these words of Krishna
And licked
The corners of his lips.
The mantra-charged weapon
Whose touch
Was like that of Indra's thunderbolt,

121 The celestial weapon
Which could withstand
Any counter-weapon,
The weapon venerated
With perfumes and flower-garlands,
The weapon reserved
For the killing of Jayadratha,
Was swiftly shot by Arjuna.

122 The arrow
Sped from the Gāṇḍīva bow,
Sliced the Sindhu-lord's head
And picking it up like a hawk
Soared skywards.

123 Firing arrow after arrow,
Pāṇḍava Arjuna
Kept aloft
The head
Of the Sindhu-rājā.
His friends exulted.
His foes grieved.

124 O Bharata!
Like a *kadaṁba*-flower
The head floated
Kept aloft
By arrow after arrow
Of Pāṇḍava Arjuna.
Simultaneously he killed
Six mahā-chariot-heroes.

125 O Bharata!
We witnessed a mahā-incredible sight
On Samantapañcaka's outskirts
Where the arrow sped
With Jayadratha's head.

126 O lord of the earth!
Bṛhadkṣatra,
The father of your son-in-law
Jayadratha,
Was deeply absorbed,
O gracious monarch,
In his *saṁdhyā*-meditations.

127 The head
Of the Sindhu-rājā,
Black-haired,
Graced with lovely ear-rings,
Was dropped
By the arrow
In the lap
Of the meditating monarch.

128 O foe-destroying monarch!
The ear-ring-graced head
Was deposited in the lap
Of Bṛhadkṣatra
Without his being aware of it.

129 O Bharata!
His *japa*-meditation over,
Bṛhadkṣatra rose.
Suddenly
The head slipped
From his lap
To the ground.

130 O foe-vanquisher!
The instant his son's head
Touched the ground,
The head
Of Indra-among-men Bṛhadkṣatra
Cracked
Into a hundred fragments.

131 The warriors of the armies
Stood stupefied with wonder,
And began praising
Vāsudeva-Krishna
And heinous-deed-doing
Bībhatsu-Arjuna.

132 O rājā!
O bull-brave Bharata!
With the extermination
Of the Sindhu-rājā
Accomplished
By diadem-decorated Arjuna,
Vāsudeva-Krishna
Dispelled the darkness
He had improvised.

133 Finest of monarchs!
Lord of the earth!
It was later
Your sons
And their followers
Realised:
This darkness
Was the manipulation
Of a māyā
Fabricated
By Vāsudeva-Krishna.

134 O lord of men!
Seeing the slaughter
Of Jayadratha,
Your sons wept.
They despaired now
Of success.

135 O rājā!
This was how
Your son-in-law,
The Sindhu-ruler,
Was slain by
Infinitely powerful
Pārtha-Arjuna,
Who also killed
Eight *akṣauhiṇīs* of soldiers.

136 O rājā! After killing Jayadratha,
Keśava-Krishna
And foe-afflicting, mahā-muscled
Pārtha-Arjuna
Blew their victory conches.

137 O Bharata!
Bhīma
The lion of the Vṛṣṇis,
Yudhāmanyu,
Illustrious Uttamaujas –
All blew
Their victory conches.

138 Hearing
The deafening din
Of all the conches
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira was convinced
That mahā-ātmaned
Phālguna-Arjuna
Had succeeded in killing
The Sindhu-ruler.

139 Yudhiṣṭhira ordered
Victory celebrations
With musical instruments.
Then he launched an attack
Against Bharadvāja's son Droṇa.

140 O rājā!
Come sunset,
And a fearful
Horripilating clash
Took place
Between Droṇa
And the Somaka warriors.

141 O rājā!
After the killing
Of Jayadratha,
All the Somakas,
Eager to kill
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa,
Launched a concerted offensive.

142 The victorious Pāṇḍavas also,
After the killing
Of the Sindhu-ruler,
Flushed with success,
Attacked Droṇa
In every way.

143 Mahā-muscled Arjuna also,
After killing
The Sindhu-ruler,
Started targeting
Your chariot-hero contingents.

144 Diadem-decked
Flower-garlanded
Vow-fulfilling
Valiant Arjuna
Began slaughtering
Your warriors
Like the rājā of the gods
Indra himself
Exterminating
The enemies of the gods
Like the sun
Scattering
The darkness of night.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FORTY-SEVEN

1 "Sañjaya! With the Sindhu-ruler
killed by ambidexterous Savyasācī-Arjuna
(said Dhṛtarāṣṭra),
what did my warriors do?"

2 Seeing the Sindhu-ruler killed by Pārtha-Arjuna
(replied Sañjaya),
Śaradvat's son Kṛpa, O Bharata,
blazing with anger,

3 Shrouded Pāṇḍava-Arjuna
with showers of arrows.
O rājā, Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
raced his chariot against Phālguna-Arjuna.

4 Advancing towards him
From two sides,
The two finest
Of finest chariot-heroes
Rained sharp arrows on him.

5 Mahā-muscled Arjuna,
A magnificent chariot-hero himself,
Oppressed by their arrow-showers,
Was sorely afflicted.

6 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Had no desire
To kill his guru Kṛpa
And his guru Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman.
Kuntī's son Arjuna
Respected his ācāryas.

7 He deflected the arrows
Of Droṇa's son and Śaradvat's son
And retaliated with
Less fierce arrows of his own.

8 But even the less fierce arrows
Were so numerous
That Pārtha-Arjuna
Wounded both of them.
Grave was their plight.

9 O rājā!
So seriously was Śaradvat's son
Kṛpa
Injured by the arrows
Of Kaunteya-Arjuna
That he lost consciousness
And slumped in his chariot.

10 Seeing his lord
Arrow-pierced and unconscious,
And mistaking him for dead,
His charioteer drove away with him.

11 Mahārāja! Seeing the unconscious
Son of Śaradvat leaving the field,
Aśvatthāman swerved past Pāṇḍava Arjuna
And drove off to fight elsewhere.

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12 The brilliant bowman
Pārtha-Arjuna
Saw Śaradvat's son Kṛpa
Arrow-pierced and unconscious
Leave the battlefield,
And felt compassion for him
And he grieved,

13 And tears
Streamed down his face,
And he said sadly:
"The mahā-wise
Kṣattā-Vidura
Anticipated this
When he warned rājā Dhṛtarāṣṭra

14 At the time
Of the birth
Of the family-destroying
Wicked Suyodhana-Duryodhana:
'Send this destroyer of your race
To the other world.

15 He spells terrible danger
For the Kaurava nobles.'
The words
Of truth-speaking Vidura
Have today come true.

16 That is why today
I have to see my guru
Bhīṣma
Lying on a bed of arrows.
*Dhik!* Shame on Kṣatriya conduct!
*Dhik!* Shame on Kṣatriya valour!
*Dhik!* Shame on Kṣatriya manliness!

17 Is there anyone
Like me
Hating a Brāhmin and an ācārya?
He is a ṛṣi's son.
He is my ācārya.
He is also the dearest
Loved-and-loving *sakhā*-friend
Of Droṇa.

18 Such is Kṛpa
Now lying unconscious
In his chariot,
Wounded by my arrows.
I did not want to,
Yet I wounded him grievously.

19 When I see him
Unconscious in his chariot,
I am also
A victim of pain.
I was grieving over
The death of my son,
I was the target
Of his arrows,

20 And so I attacked him
With countless arrows.
Wounded Kṛpa
Keeps reminding me
Of the grief I bear
For my dead son.

21 Krishna!
Look at him
Sprawled senseless and helpless
In his chariot!
Those bull-brave men
Who after gaining wisdom
From their ācāryas

22 Give them what they desire –
Such men
Attain god-like status.
And those despicable men
Who after gaining wisdom
From their gurus

23 Cause them harm –
Such men
Perform
The lowest of deeds
And go to Niraya
The hell without happiness.
My karma today deserves that hell.

24 My arrows today
Have laid low
My ācārya Kṛpa
In his chariot.
A long time ago,
When he taught me
The use of weapons,
Kṛpa said to me:

25 'Scion of the Kuru race!
Never ever
Strike a guru.'
This excellent advice
Of my mahātmā ācārya,

26 I have thrown
To the winds today.
I have riddled him
With arrows.
I namaskāra Gautama's son Kṛpa.
I offer my pūjā to him
Who never flees the field of battle.

27 O Vārṣṇeya-Krishna!
I am ashamed!
*Dhik*! Shame on me
For raising my hand
Against him!"
Even as ambidexterous,
Savyasācī-Arjuna grieved,

28 Radhā's son Karṇa,
Enraged by the slaughter
Of the Sindhu-ruler,
Attacked Arjuna.
Seeing the chariot
Of Rādhā's son
Speeding towards Arjuna,

29 The two Pāñcāla princes
Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujas,
As well as Sātyaki
Rushed to his aid.
Seeing Rādhā's son advancing,
The mahā-chariot-hero Pārtha-Arjuna

30 Smiled, and said
To Devakī's son Krishna:
"Adhiratha's son Karṇa
Is advancing towards
The chariot of Sātyaki.

31 He has not been able
To accept the death
Of Bhūriśravas.
O Janārdana-Krishna!
Drive my chariot
To where he is speeding.

32 On no account
Should Sātyaki suffer the fate
Of Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas."
Addressed by Savyasācī-Arjuna,
Mahā-muscled Keśava-Krishna

33 Of mahā-energy said
These appropriate words:
"O Pāṇḍava, mahā-muscled Sātyaki
Can singly face Karṇa.

34 Besides, that bull-brave Sātvata
Is reinforced by
The two sons of Drupada,
Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujas.
O Pārtha-Arjuna!
This is not the right time
For you to fight Karṇa.

35 Karṇa possesses
The fiercely-flaming meteor-missile
Given to him
By Vāsava-Indra –
A mahā-weapon!
O foe-destroying hero!
He has reserved it for you.
He offers it pūjā every day.

36 Let Karṇa battle it out
With the Sātvata Sātyaki.
Kuntī's son, I know when the end
Of that wicked-ātmaned wretch will come,
Toppled by your arrows."

37 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said,
"Tell me all about the clash
between heroic Karṇa
and the Vṛṣṇi Sātyaki,
after the deaths of Bhūriśravas
and the Sindhu-ruler.

38 Sātyaki was made chariot-less.
Which new chariot
did he take?
And the two chariot-protectors –
the Pāñcālas Yudhāmanyu and Bhūriśravas –
what about them?"

39 I will describe in detail
(Sañjaya replied)
that maha-clash –
the result of your misconduct. Listen.

40 *Prabhu!* Lord!
Krishna knew beforehand
that heroic Sātyaki would today lose
to Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas.

41 O rājā! Janārdana-Krishna knows
past and future.
He summoned his charioteer Dāruka
and ordered:

42 'Get my chariot ready tomorrow.'
Neither the gods,
nor the Gandharvas, Yakṣas,
serpents, Rākṣasas,

43 Nor human beings can defeat
twinned Krishna and Arjuna.
Only Pitāmaha Brahmā, the gods and Siddhas
know the nature of these two.

44 Their glory is unsurpassable.
Let me now
describe the battle.
Seeing Sātyaki chariot-less
and Karṇa ready
for the fearful encounter,

45 Mādhava-Krishna sounded his bull-sonorous mahā-conch.
Dāruka understood the conch-signal,

46 And drove up
With the chariot
Flying the flag
Emblemed with Suparṇa-Garuḍa.
With Keśava-Krishna's permission,
That Dāruka-driven chariot,

47 Blazing like fire,
Radiant like the sun,
Was boarded by
Śini's grandson Sātyaki.
Driven-as-desired,
Pulled by
Śaibya
Sugriva
Meghapuṣpa
Balāhaka –

48 Four splendidly caprisoned steeds –
Four swift steeds –
It resembled
A celestial flying chariot.

49 From it Sātyaki
Released a shower of arrows
On Rādhā's son Karṇa.
Even Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujas,
Arjuna's wheel-protectors,

50 Left the chariot
Of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
And rushed to attack
Rādhā's son Karṇa.
Mahārāja,
Rādhā's son Karṇa also
Showered them
With arrow-volleys,

51 And blazing with anger
He attacked the unrelenting
Grandson of Śini, Sātyaki.
Not gods
Not Gandharvas
Not anti-gods
Not Rākṣasas

52 Had ever heard
Of a battle like this
Fought on earth.
The entire army
Of chariots and horses
And men and elephants,

53 O mahārāja,
Witnessed their valour
And stood entranced.
All of them
Stood and marvelled
At that superhuman clash

54 Between
The two heroes,
And the skill
Of the charioteer Dāruka.
Advancing
Backing
Swerving
Circling –

55 The driving dexterity
Of Daruka the charioteer
Of Kaśyapa lineage
Astounded everybody.
The gods
The Gandharvas
The Dānava anti-gods
From high in the sky

56 Watched and marvelled
At the clash
Between Karṇa
And Śini's grandson
Sātyaki.
The two heroes
Were battling
For the sake
Of their friends.

57 Mahārāja,
Karṇa like an immortal god
And Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
Deluged each other
With arrow-showers.

58 First it was Karṇa
Who, unable to accept
The death of Jalasaṁdha
Of the Kaurava clan,
Incapacitated Sātyaki,
The grandson of Śini,
With his arrow-showers.

59 Deep-sighing
Like a mahā-serpent,
Grief-propelled
And anger-roused,
Glaring at Sātyaki
As if to consume him,
Karṇa

60 Again and again
Rushed
To attack Sātyaki.
O foe-subducer!
Seeing him inflamed,
Sātyaki struck him

61 With a torrent
Of arrows,
Like one elephant
Clashing with another.
Fighting like two lions,
Those two lions-among-men,

62 Of wondrous valour,
Wounded each other
On the battlefield.
With pure-iron arrows
The grandson of Śini
Afflicted Karṇa,

63 The great foe-subduer,
Lacerating his body
Again and again
With repeated attacks.
With a *bhalla*
Broad-headed arrow
He toppled Karṇa's charioteer
From his vehicle.

64 With sharp arrows
He killed the four white horses
Of Karṇa.
Then, the bull-brave Bharata,
Shredding Karṇa's war-flag
Into a hundred tatters,

65 Deprived Karṇa
Of his chariot
In front of your son.
O rājā,
Your warriors
Lost heart,
But the mahā-chariot-hero

66 Vṛṣasena, Karṇa's son,
Madra's ruler Śalya,
And Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Collectively
Succeeding in surrounding
Śini's grandson
Sātyaki.

67 O rājā!
All over the battlefield
Shouts
Of "Hai! Hai!"
O rājā!
With Karṇa unchårioted
By the arrows
Of the Sātvata Sātyaki,

68 In the ensuing
Chaos and confusion,
Deep-sighing Karṇa
Climbed into
The chariot of Duryodhana
For safety.

69 He recalled
The friendship
He had with your son,
O rājā,
From the days
Of his childhood.

70 He was firm
On keeping the promise
He had made to Duryodhana
To protect Duryodhana
As the ruler of the kingdom.
Though he unchariotted Karṇa,
Your sons,

71 Duḥśāsana and others,
Including Karṇa,
Were not killed
By self-controlled Sātyaki
Because Sātyaki had pledged
To honour the vows
Of Bhīma and Pārtha-Arjuna.

72 Enough for him
To unchariot them
And humiliate them
Without taking their lives.
Bhīma had vowed
To kill your sons,

73 And Pārtha-Arjuna
Had openly declared
That he would kill Karṇa.
Though they tried
Their very utmost,
With Karṇa at their head,
To kill

74 Sātyaki,
Your chariot-heroes failed.
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
Kṛtavarman,
And other mahā-chariot-heroes,

75 And hundreds
Of other bull-brave Kṣatriyas
Were routed
By Sātyaki
Wielding a single bow,
Eager to please
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
And eager to attain the other world.

76 Persecutor-of-foes Sātyaki,
Equal in valour
To the Krishna-Arjuna duo,
Routed all your warriors
With a smile
Playing on his lips.

77 O lion-among-men!
Brilliant bowmen are three
In the world –
Krishna
Pārtha-Arjuna
Śini's grandson Sātyaki.
I do not know
Of a fourth.

78 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"Riding the invincible chariot
Of Vāsudeva-Krishna,
Equal in valour to him,
Rendering Karṇa chariotless,
Sātyaki

79 Had a Dāruka
As his charioteer.
Naturally he was proud
Of the strength of his arms.
But did foe-crushing Sātyaki
Ride in any other chariot?

80 I want to know this.
You describe everything
So well.
I think Sātyaki
Is invincible.
Tell me all,
Sañjaya."

81 Sañjaya said:
O rājā, listen.
I will give all the details.
Dāruka had a younger brother –
A maha-intelligent man
Who quickly brought
A splendidly equipped chariot

82 Whose shafts
Had gold and iron chains
And silk ribbons
Studded with thousands
Of stars
And flying
A lion-emblemed war-flag.

83 Its horses
Were gold-caparisoned
And wind-swift
Fleeter than sound –
Moon-white horses
Of the Sindhu breed.

84 O lord of the earth!
They were protected
With gold-plated armour.
Small bells tinkled sweetly
As they trotted.
*Śakti*-spears and *tomara* thunderbolts
Were among the chariot's weapons.

85 A variety
Of war-weapons
And accessories
Adorned the chariot.
Its wheels rattled
Like roaring storm-clouds.
Dāruka's younger brother
Drove the chariot alongside Sātyaki.

86 Climbing into it
Sātyaki began his assault
On your warriors.
And Dāruka also
Drove his chariot
Near Keśava-Krishna.

87 O rājā!
A magnificent chariot
Was prepared for Karṇa,
Pulled by milk-white
Conch-white gold-caparisoned
Fleet-footed horses.

88 Its war-flag was tied
With gold thread.
Pennants fluttered on it.
Weapons graced it –
A multitude of them.
It was driven
By an expert charioteer.

89 This chariot was brought
Before Karṇa
Who climbed into it
And began his assault
On his enemies.
I have given you
The details you wanted.

90 Let me now describe
The disastrous consequences
Of your unjust policy.
Bhima has already
Killed thirty-one
Of your sons.

91 They were led
By Durmukha.
They were versatile warriors.
The Sātvata Sātyaki
And Arjuna
Killed hundreds more.

92 They were led
By Bhīṣma.
Bhagadatta is also slain,
O Bharata.
O rājā!
This massacre has happened
Because the counsel
You gave was crooked.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHT

1 “Sañjaya,” said Dhṛtarāṣṭra, “my warriors
And their warriors stood ready for battle.
What did Bhīma do? Tell me, Sañjaya.”

2 When Bhīma
Was unchārioted by Karṇa
(continued Sañjaya),
He was infuriated
By Karṇa’s
Arrow-sharp insults.
Indignant,
He said to Phālguna-Arjuna:

3 “Again and again:
‘You without a moustache!
You fool!
You glutton!
You who know nothing
Of war and weapons!
You baby boy!
You coward!’

4 That’s what Karṇa called me
In front of you, Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
I will kill anyone who says that.
And Karṇa said that!

5 Mahā-muscled one!
I took this vow
Together with you.
Kuntī’s son!
The vow that is mine
Is also yours.
This goes without saying.

6 O finest-of-men!
Keep this vow in mind
When you plan to kill.
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
Whatever you do,
See that you do it
To fulfil that vow.”

7 Incomparable Arjuna
Heard these words
Of Bhīma,
And driving close
To Karṇa,
Said:

8 "Karṇa! Karṇa!
Son of a charioteer!
What you see
Is not there!
You sing your own praises!
All you think of
Is adharma!
Listen carefully
To what I say now.

9 When two warriors fight
There is only one outcome –
You win
Or you lose.
Son of Rādhā!
Even if Indra-Vāsava
Takes part
In a battle,
None can tell
If he will win
Or lose.

10 Shameless Karṇa!
Again and again
You have chosen
To flee the field.
Yet Bhīma,
Keeping his greatness
And family name
In mind,

11 Never said a word
Of reproach to you
When you fled.
Because fate had it so,
O son of a charioteer,
You did succeed

[VII:148:12-17]

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12 In uncharioting
The brave Pāṇḍava Bhīma.
Son of Rādhā,
By insulting Bhīma
You did what's expected
Of your family.

13 Finest of men!
You know nothing
Of the calamity
That faces you.
Like a jackal
Mocking other jungle creatures
You have mocked
The Kṣatriya caste.

14 It's in Bhīma's blood
To fight
On a field of battle.
It's in your blood
To drive a chariot.
Son of Rādhā!
I say this to you
On the battlefield,

15 In front of the armed soldiers:
'Do your very best!
Even Vāsava-Indra cannot
Be sure of victory.'

16 Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
Uncharioted you
And made you senseless.
You nearly died.
He could have killed you
But he spared your life.

17 And you –
Because fate had it so,
You uncharioted
Mahā-powerful Bhīma,
And hurled
Insulting words at him.

18 This was an act
Of adharma!
This was mahā-adharma!
It was ignoble!
It was un-*ārya*!
True heroes
Do not boast
About their victories.

19 Bull-brave heroes
Never use cruel words,
Never blame others.
Son of a charioteer!
You must have a low mind
To speak as you do.

20 You don't discriminate,
You are ill-mannered,
You say things
That should never be said.
The noble warrior –
The vow-fulfiller –
The justly renowned

21 Bhīma –
The unpleasant words
You said to him –
This was not right.
In front of all the warriors,
In front of Keśava-Krishna,
In front of me,

22 Repeatedly
On the battlefield
Bhīma succeeded
In uncharioting you.
Yet Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma
Spoke not one harsh word
Against you.

23 But you spoke cruelly
To wolf-waisted
Vṛkodara-Bhīma,
And you and your allies
Unjustly slaughtered
Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu
In my absence.

24 You will now suffer
The fruits
Of those crimes.
Ill-minded one!
When you cut Abhimanyu's bow,
You invited your own doom,

25 You fool,
For I will kill you,
Your sons, your relatives,
Your attendants – all!
Finish what you must finish,
While there is time.
Mahā-doom stares you in the face.

26 Today
In front of your eyes
I will kill your son Vṛṣasena,
As well as
All those deluded kings
Who dare to stop me.

27 I touch my bow
And I vow this.
May truth be with me!
You fool!
Ignorant!
Arrogant!
Deluded!

28 When foolish Duryodhana
Sees you dead,
Then will he repent."
When Arjuna vowed
To kill
The son of Karṇa,

29 Noise and confusion
Spread through the ranks
Of the chariot-heroes.
Even as this tumult
Of war's impending horror
Enveloped the field,

30 The diminishing rays
Of the thousand-rayed deity
The sun-god
Slowly began setting
In the west.
O rājā,
Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna,
Standing in front,

31 Embraced heinous-deed-doer
Bībhatsu-Arjuna
Who had taken the vow,
And said:
"Victorious one!
Jiṣṇu-Arjuna!
You are fortunate
To have kept your mahā-vow.

32 You are fortunate
To have killed Bṛhadkṣatra
The wicked warrior
And his son.
O Bharata scion!
Even the general of the gods,
Facing Dhṛtarāṣṭra's army,

33 Would be troubled
On the battlefield.
Jiṣṇu-Arjuna! This is sure.
I seriously think
There is none in the three worlds

34 Who can oppose them
Except you,
O lion-among-men!
Some your equal,
Many lords of the earth

35 Have gathered here
On Dhṛtarāṣṭra's orders.
None of them, however,
Was ever able to face you,
Dressed though they were
In excellent armour,
Because on the battlefield

36 You have the prowess
And the valour
Of Rudra-Śiva,
Of Śakra-Indra,
Of Antaka the god of doom.
There is none to equal
Your prowess in battle.

37 You have shown this today.
You are indeed
A tormentor of foes!
When ill-ātmaned Karṇa
And his relatives and followers
Are killed by you,

38 I will be the first
To felicitate you
For eliminating your foes."
Arjuna replied:
"Mādhava-Krishna,
By your grace

39 I have kept my vow.
I have kept a vow
Which even the gods
Would find hard to keep.
It is not surprising,
Keśava-Krishna,
That victory comes easy
To those who follow you.

40 By your grace
Yudhiṣṭhira will rule
The entire earth.
O Vṛṣṇi descendant!
All this is the result
Of your power.
Yours is the victory,
Lord! *Prabhu!*
O Madhusūdana-Krishna,
What are we
But recipients always
Of your felicitations?"

41 Krishna heard
These words
Of Pārtha-Arjuna,
And slowly manoeuvred
The horses
To give him
A full view
Of the mahā-cruel battlefield.

42 Krishna said:
"Felled by your arrows,
They lie sprawled
On the field –
These great earth-lords
Who came here
Seeking victory and fame.

43 Weapons
Ornaments
Scattered . . .
Horses
Elephants
Chariots
Destroyed . . .
Armours
Pierced
Shredded . . .
A pitiful
Distressful
Spectacle . . .

44 Some dead
Some half-dead . . .
And even the dead
Lords of the earth
Shining in their glory
Looking as if alive . . .

45 Look!
Littered
On the ground
Gold-feathered arrows
Sharp war-weapons
Camp animals
And their equipment . . .

46 Look!
Coats-of-mail
Shields
Necklaces and ear-rings
Ear-ringed heads
Turbans and diadems
Garlands and head-gems and dresses

47 Neck-threads
Armlets
Gold coins
And other ornaments
Of all kinds
Spreading their splendour
On the field –
O Bharata!

48 Axle-trees
Quivers
Flags and pennants
*Upaskara*-accessories
*Adhiṣṭhana*-chariot-stands
Shafts and chains

49 Broken wheels
All kinds of axles and yokes
Leather straps
Caparisons
Reins
Bows and arrows

50 Colourful
Elephant-covers
Rich carpets
For elephant-backs
Lances
Hooks
*Śakti*-spears
*Bhindipāla*-darts
Arrow-cases
Iron-spiked maces
*Paraṣvadha*-hatchets

51 *Prāsa*-barbed-missiles
*Tomara*-javelins
*Kunta*-lances
Staffs
Clubs
*Śataghni*-fire-missiles
*Bhuśuṇḍi*-fire-arms
Swords
Battle-axes
Swords

52 *Musala*-maces
*Mudgara*-hammers
Massive clubs
*Kuṇapa*-spears
Gold-embroidered whips –
O bull-brave Bharata!

53 Bells on the necks
Of Indra-powerful elephants
Colourful harnesses
Garlands
Ornaments
Robes –

54 The earth
Dazzled
With their splendour
Like an autumn sky
Sprinkled with stars.
The earth-lords
Who gave their lives
For their earth-kingdoms

55 Sprawled on the earth,
Embracing her
Like a lover
Embracing a beloved.
Elephants
Like mountain-peaks,
As huge as Aīrāvata
The elephant of Indra

56 Spouted blood
From their bodies
Pierced with weapons,
Like red chalk
Streaming
Down mountain-slopes.

57 Look at them
Writhing
In mortal agony.
Look at the gold-
Caparisoned horses
Sprawled dead!

58 And these massive chariots
Each as huge
As the city of the Gandharvas,
Its rider slain,
Flag and pennants shredded,
Axle broken,
Wheels smashed,
Charioteer killed . . .

59 Shafts devastated,
Top splintered,
Chains snapped,
Flagstaff toppled,
Yoke ruined . . .
Yet looking like
A celestial flying chariot.

60 Hundreds and thousands
Of foot-soldiers
Clutching bows and shields,
Blood streaming
From their wounded bodies . . .

61 O mahā-muscled one!
Look at the mangled flesh
Of warriors
Pierced by your arrows!
Hair mired in mud,
They embrace the earth.

62 O finest of men!
Look!
What a grisly spectacle!
Corpses of elephants
Overturned chariots
Dead horses
A swampy filth
Of blood
Marrow
And flesh –
The delight
Of night-creatures
Dogs and wolves
And *piśāca*-ogres . . .

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63 *Prabhu*! Lord!
Only the finest
Of the gods,
Only the performer
Of a hundred sacrifices,
Who slaughtered
The Daityas and Dānavas
In the mahā-battle –
Only Indra
Is capable
Of accomplishing
Such an illustrious,
Fame-enhancing karma."

64 Sañjaya continued:
Showing this spectacle
On the battlefield
To diadem-decked Arjuna,
Krishna sounded
His Pāñcajanya conch
Before his assembled warriors.

65 Foe-destroying
Janārdana-Krishna
Showed the battlefield
To diadem-decked Arjuna
And proceeded
To Ajātaśatru-Yudhiṣṭhira
The One-without-a-foe
To inform
Pāṇḍu's son
Of the death of Jayadratha.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FORTY-NINE

1 After the Sindhu-ruler Jayadratha
Had been killed
By Pārtha-Arjuna
(continued Sañjaya),
Krishna went
To Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
And happily greeted and honoured him:

2 "O Indra-among-rājās!
O finest of men!
You are fortunate. You foe is dead.
Your younger brother
Has fulfilled his vow."

3 Hearing these words
Of Krishna,
Yudhiṣṭhira, the destroyer
Of his foe's cities,
Rejoiced.
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
Alighted from his chariot,
O Bharata,

4 And with eyes
Brimming with tears of joy
He embraced
Krishna and Arjuna.
Running his palm
On Krishna's lotus-lovely face,

5 He said to Vāsudeva-Krishna
And Dhanañjaya-Arjuna:
"O lotus-eyed Krishna!
To hear such happy words
From you
Pleases me no end.

6 I feel as fulfilled
As one who swims an ocean
Hopefully.
Pṛthā-Kuntī's brilliant son Arjuna
Has accomplished
A wonderful feat today.

7 O mahā-chariot-heroes!
I am blessed
To see you both
After a difficult mission
Well accomplished.
I am blessed
That the vicious low-born
Sindhu-ruler is dead.

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8 We have you, O Krishna,
As our protector –
There is no task
In the three worlds,
No matter how impossible,
That we cannot accomplish.

9 O Krishna!
I am blessed, I rejoice
That under your protection,
O Govinda-Krishna,
Arjuna has succeeded
In killing vicious Jayadratha.

10 O Madhusūdana-Krishna!
Lord!
Guru of all the worlds!
By your grace,
O Govinda-Krishna,
We will surely
Rout all our enemies.

11 You have always loved us,
Always sought our welfare.
Always assured
Of your protection
We have gathered
Arms and made preparations
For war,

12 Like the gods
In the distant past
When they defeated
The anti-gods
With the help of Śakra-Indra.
O younger brother of Śakra-Indra!
O Janārdana-Krishna,
A task impossible
Even for the gods

13 Was accomplished
By Phālguna-Arjuna
With your wisdom
And your prowess.
O Krishna!
From the time I heard
Of your boyhood exploits,

14 So magnificent, so divine,
I realised I would
Defeat my enemies
And regain my kingdom.

15 Extirpator-of-enemies!
It is by your grace
That Śakra-Indra
Used his prowess
To rout thousands
And thousands of Daityas
And establish himself
As chief of the gods.

16 O Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna!
It is your grace
That keeps stable
This universe of
Moving and unmoving creatures
Engaged in japa-meditation
And *homa* fire-rituals.

17 Finest of men! Mahā-muscled one!
Hidden in primal darkness,
In one vast primaeval water,
By your grace
This universe manifested itself.

18 Those who see
Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna
The Supreme Creator
Of all the worlds
The Undecaying One
The Parmātman –
They are freed
From all delusion.

19 O Purāṇa
The Ancient One
O Paramaṁ Devaṁ
The Supreme One
O Devadevaṁ
O God of gods
O Sanātanaṁ
The Eternal One
O Guru of the gods –
Whoever shelters in you
Is freed
From all delusion.

20 Hṛṣīkeśa-Krishna!
O Divine One O Deva
Without beginning
Without end
O World-Creator
O Undeteriorating One –
Whoever is your bhakta
Overcomes
All obstacles.

21 Paraṁ Purāṇaṁ
Puruṣaṁ
Paraṁ
O Ancient Puruṣa
O Supreme Puruṣa
O Supreme Goal –
Whoever shelters
In the Supreme Goal
Attains
The Supreme Prosperity
The Supreme Felicity.

22 The four Vedas
Sing of you
You are sung
In the four Vedas
O Mahā-Ātman
I shall take shelter in you
And I shall achieve
The Supreme Felicity.

23 O Parameśa
O Supreme God
O Pareśeśa
O God of all gods
O Tiryagīśa
O God of all creation
O Nareśvara
O God of humans
O Sarveśvareśveśeśa
O God of the god of gods
Puruṣottama Supreme Purusa
*Namaste* I bow to you.

24 *Prabu*! Lord!
Mādhava-Krishna!
O Īśvara of īśvaras!
O God of gods!
Glory to you!
O Large-Eyed One!
O Ātman of all!
You are the origin
And end of all.

25 You are the *śākha*
The loved-and-loving friend
Of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
You are the welfare-wisher
Of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
You are the protector
Of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna –
Whoever seeks the shelter
Of such a benefactor
Of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Always finds happiness.

26 Defectless One!
The ancient ṛṣi
Mārkaṇḍeya
Narrated your story
And your glory to me.
That holy *muni*
Was aware of the fullness
Of your grandeur.

27 Asita
Devala
Nārada of mahā-tapasyā
And my grandfather Pitāmahā-Vyāsa
Have described
Your all-excelling glory.

28 O Supreme Energy
O Supreme Brahma
O Essence of Truth and Tapasyā
O Supreme Excellence
O Essence of Glory
O Creator of the Cosmos

29 You create
The entire cosmos
Whatever is animate
Whatever inanimate
And at the time
Of universal dissolution
The entire cosmos
Merges back into you.

30 Lord of the world!
Many are the names
By which humans call you:
Eternal
Birthless
God-of-gods
Protector
Unborn
Unmanifested –
These are the names
Given to you
By those who are wise in the Vedas.

31 Bhūtāmānaṁ
The Ātman of all beings
Mahātmānaṁ
Anantaṁ
The one without end
Viśvatomukhaṁ
The Everywhere-facing

32 So subtle
Is your mystery
Even the gods
Do not know it
You are the Lord
Of the world
O Paraṁ Devaṁ
O Supreme Divinity
O Nārāyaṇa
O Paramātmānaṁ
O Supreme Ātman
O Īsvara
Supreme Lord.

33 In the past
In the present
In the future
There is none
Who can list
Your glorious deeds.

34 Like the gods
Protected by Śakra-Indra
We are protected
By you.
You are to us
A compassionate friend
Who possesses
All the guṇas."

35 Janārdana-Krishna
Listened to the words
Of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
And mahā-illustrious
Hari-Krishna
Said in reply:

36 "Wicked Jayadratha
Has been killed
By your intense tapasyā
By your supreme dharma
By your goodness.

37 O lion-among-men!
It is as a result
Of your deep *dhyāna*
That Jiṣṇu-Arjuna
Was able to kill
Thousands of warriors
As well as Jayadratha.

38 No one can equal
Pārtha-Arjuna
In knowledge
Of war-weapons
In swiftness
In unerring skill
And other virtues
Of a warrior.

39 O finest Bharata!
That explains how
Your younger brother
Arjuna today
Succeeded in decimating
The enemy ranks
And killing
The Sindhu-rājā Jayadratha."

40 Lord of the earth!
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Embraced Jiṣṇu-Arjuna
And gently
Stroking his face
Said encouragingly:

41 "Phālguna-Arjuna!
Splendid the mahā-karma
You did today.
Even the gods
Led by Vāsava-Indra
Would find it impossible.

42 Foe-annihilator!
You have killed
Your enemy today.
By doing so,
Your vow is completed.
We are blessed.
We rejoice
That by killing Jayadratha
You have vindicated truth."

43 Mahā-illustrious
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
Said this
To Guḍākeśa-Arjuna
And stroked Arjuna's back
With his scented hand.

44 When he finished,
Mahātmā Keśava-Krishna
And Pāṇḍava Arjuna
Said to the lord
Of the earth:

45 "Wicked Rājā Jayadratha
Has been reduced
To ashes
In the fire of your anger.
The Dhṛtarāṣṭran forces
Are being decimated.

46 O Bharata!
It is your wrath
That has routed
These Kauravas.
O foe-exterminator!
It is your wrath
That will continue
To devastate them.

47 By rousing the wrath
Of those who can kill
By looks alone,
Ill-minded Suyodhana-Duryodhana
Has brought doom
On himself and his friends.

48 The Kaurava Grandsire
Bhīṣma
Whom gods could not harm,
Felled by your wrath,
Lies on an arrow-bed
Of death.

49 O foe-afflicter!
Victory in battle
Is difficult for those
Who face your wrath.
O Pāṇḍu's son!
They are doomed
To die.

50 Bestower of honour
On others!
Those who face your wrath
Will lose kingdom, life,
Wealth, sons,
Happiness –
Everything.

51 Persecutor of foes!
The Kauravas are doomed –
Their children
Their cattle
Their relatives and friends
Are doomed –
I can see this –
Because they have roused
The wrath of one
Who faithfully follows
The principles of rāja-dharma.

52 Mahā-muscled Bhīma
And the mahā-chariot-hero
Sātyaki –
Their bodies
Variously arrow-wounded –
Paid their respects
To their elder
And guru
Yudhiṣṭhira.

53 And sat before him
On the ground,
Surrounded by the Pāñcālas.
Seeing the two heroes,
Both brilliant bowmen,
Seated before him
With palms folded in *añjali,*
And cheerful though wounded,

54 Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Complimented both
Bhīma and Sātyaki:
"It is my good fortune
To see two heroes
Who have crossed
The ocean-army

55 Made near-impassable
By the Droṇa *grāha*-crocodile
And the *makara*-sea-monster
Of Hṛdīka's son Kṛtavarman.
You have routed all the earth-lords.

56 I am blessed indeed
That I see you
Victorious today.
I am blessed.
That Droṇa is defeated
Along with mahā-powerful
Hṛdīka-Kṛtavarman.

57 O bull-brave warriors!
I am blessed
That Karṇa
Has been humiliated
And Śalya
Forced to flee
The battlefield.

58 I am blessed
To see you both
Veteran warriors
And finest of chariot-heroes
Returning safe and sound
From the battle.

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59 I am blessed
To see in front of me
Two heroes
Who follow my commands
And enhance my honour
Safe and sound
After crossing the ocean-army
Of their enemies.

60 You who take pride
In war-valour,
You who never
Run away from battle,
I am blessed
To see you safe and sound."

61 O rājā!
Pāṇḍu's son Yudhiṣṭhira said this
To lions-among-men
Yuyudhāna Sātyaki and Vṛkodara-Bhīma,
And embraced them,
Weeping tears of joy.

62 O lord of the earth!
The entire army
Of the Pāṇḍavas
Gaining heart
Rejoiced and prepared
Afresh for battle.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FIFTY

1 O rājā (continued Sañjaya),
The death of the Sindhu-ruler
Desolated
Your son Suyodhana-Duryodhana.
Tears streamed down his face.
He despaired of victory.

2 He sighed heavily
Like a snake with broken fangs.
Your three-worlds-offending son
Passed
Through extreme agony.

3 Seeing Jiṣṇu-Arjuna,
Bhīma
And the Sātvata Sātyaki
Wreak have in his ranks,
A mahā-massacre,

4 He turned thin and pale,
He lost hope,
His eyes filled with tears.
He thought:
*There is no warrior*
*In this world*
*To equal Arjuna –*

5 *Not Droṇa*
*Not Rādhā's son Karṇa*
*Not Aśvatthāman*
*Not Kṛpa.*
O lord of men!
None of them
Would be able to face
A wrathful Arjuna.

6 He thought:
*Today on the field*
*Pārtha-Arjuna routed*
*All my mahā-chariot-heroes.*
*Not one of them*
*Could stop him*
*Killing the Sindhu-ruler.*

7 *Most of my Kaurava forces*
*Have been wiped out.*
*I wonder*
*If even Puraṁdara-Indra*
*Could have saved them.*

8 *I did all I could,*
*I went to war*
*With all available*
*Arms and ammunition,*
*Depending on Karṇa.*
*Now*
*Karṇa has been routed.*
*And Jayadratha is dead.*

9 *Acyuta-Krishna*
*Argued for peace.*
*Putting my faith in Karṇa,*
*I rejected his terms*
*Treating them as trivial*
*As pieces of straw.*
*And now*
*That same Karṇa*
*Has been routed.*

10 O rājā!
O bull-brave Bharata!
Depressed,
Your three-worlds-offending
Son Duryodhana
Went to Droṇa,

11 And informed him
About the rout of the Kauravas,
The victory of his foes,
And the calamity
Facing the Dhṛtarāṣṭran army.

12 Duryodhana said:
"O ācārya!
Witness this massacre
Of kings crowned
And lustrally anointed.
At the head of them all
Is my brave Grandsire
Pitāmaha-Bhīṣma.

13 Lustful Śikhaṇḍin,
After killing Bhīṣma,
Arrogantly struts
At the head
Of the Pāñcāla forces.

14 And ambidexterous
Savyasācī-Arjuna,
After decimanting
Seven akṣauhiṇīs,
Has slaughtered
Your near-invincible disciple
Rājā Jayadratha.

15 And so many
Of my allies,
Devoted to my welfare,
Hoping for my victory,
Have gone to the abode
Of Yama, god of death.
How can I ever repay
The debt I owe them?

16 So many lords of the earth
Who wanted me to be
The lord of the earth
Have given up the joys of the earth
And are lying dead on the earth.

17 I am a coward.
I am the cause
Of the deaths of so many friends.
Even the performance
Of a thousand *aśvamedhas,*
A thousand Horse-Sacrifices,
Will not purify me.

18 They fought for me –
For me,
Lustful and wicked
And dharma-destroying me –
And they have gone
To the realm
Of Vivasvat's son Yama,
The god of death.

19 Why doesn't the earth
Crack open
And swallow me –
For I am the enemy
Of my own friends
Among the earth-lords?

20 Killed along with
Many other rājās,
Blood-drenched Grandsire Bhīṣma
Lies on a bed of arrows.
And I –
I did nothing to save him.

21 If I go to him,
The near-invincible
Other-world-conquering
Grancestor Bhīṣma,
What will he say to me,
An ignoble wretch,
A traitor to friends,
A man of adharma?

22 See how that brilliant bowman
And mahā-chariot-hero
Jalasaṁdha
Sacrificed his life for me!
He was killed by Sātyaki.

23 Why should I
Be the only one
Living? –
When the Kāmboja-ruler,
And Alambuṣa
And many others
Have died for my sake?

24 Exerting their śakti
To the fullest,
These never-retreating heroes
Fought my enemies
And laid down their lives
For my sake.

25 Today
I will do what I can
To repay the debt
I owe them, O foe-subduer!
I will go to the Yamunā
And offer water-libations
To their memory.

26 O all-weapons-expert!
I vow today
I swear by the truth
By *iṣṭāpūrta* piety-and-charity
By my accumulated merits
By my valour
I swear by my sons

27 That I will find peace
Today
By killing all the Pāṇḍavas
And the Pāñcālas
Or I will go
To the same place
Where my dead friends are.

28 I will go
Where they have gone,
Those bull-brave heroes
Who for my sake
Died at the hands
Of diadem-decked Arjuna.

29 O mahā-muscled one!
Because they are unprotected
Even my allies
Are deserting us.
They seek the welfare
Of the Pāṇḍavas,
Not mine.

30 Firm-in-truth Bhīṣma
Will will the time
Of his death
On the battlefield.
And you
Are indifferent to us
Because Arjuna
Is your favoured disciple.

31 That is why all
Who wanted my victory
Have perished.
It seems to me
That only Karṇa
Wants me to win.

32 Fool that I am,
Success-seeker that I am,
Without knowing my friends
I put my trust in them.
Things have not turned out
The way I expected.

33 Those who were known
As among my best friends
Took advantage
Of my ambition
And what I intended
Turned out to be otherwise.

34 Jayadratha
And Somadatta's valiant son
Bhūriśravas are dead.
So are
Abhīsaha
Śūrasena
Śibi
And all the Vasātis.

35 I will go today
Back to the field
Where those bull-brave heroes
Perished
Battling for my sake
At the hands of diadem-decked Arjuna.

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36 O ācārya
Of the sons of Pāṇḍu!
There is no point
In my living
With all my bull-brave friends gone.
I ask you this:
Grant me leave to go."

SECTION ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-ONE

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:
"*Tāta*! Dear one!
What were your feelings
When the Sindhu-ruler Jayadratha
Was killed by Savyasācī-Arjuna
And Bhūriśravas by Sātyaki?

2 And, Sañjaya, tell me
What did Droṇa reply
When Duryodhana spoke to him thus
In the midst of the Kurus?"

3 O Bharata!
(replied Sañjaya)
The death of the Sindhu-ruler
And Bhūriśravas
Created a tumult
Among the Kaurava ranks.

4 All of them
Blamed the policy
Of your son
Which they held responsible
For the deaths
Of hundreds
Of bull-brave Kṣatriyas.

5 Droṇa was deeply hurt
By the words
Of your son.
He pondered
For a while
And then remarked
Sorrowfully:

6 "Duryodhana!
You have pierced me
To the heart
With your word-arrows.
Why have you done this?
I have always said
That Savyasācī-Arjuna
Cannot be defeated in battle.

7 O Kaurava!
Wasn't there proof
Enough of this
When Śikhaṇḍin,
Protected in battle
By diadem-decked Arjuna,
Killed Bhīṣma?

8 When Bhīṣma fell,
Whom the gods and Dānavas
Could not defeat,
I knew the end
Of the Kauravas was near.

9 When a person
Who is acknowledged
As the finest warrior
In all the three worlds,
Is slain –
Who remains
To give us confidence?

10 The dice, dear one, *tāta*,
Played by Śakuni
In the assembly hall
Of the Kauravas
Were not dice
But sharp foe-
Afflicting arrows.

11 Dear one! *Tāta*!
You did not understand then
The words of Vidura.
Those very dice
Have turned into killing arrows
In the hands of Pārtha-Arjuna.

12 You did not listen
To the beneficial words
Of mahā-ātmaned
And wise Vidura
Spoken for your welfare.
Your desire for victory

13 Made you reject them.
Duryodhana!
Those very same words
Have brought
This fearful calamity
On your head.

14 The fool
Who rejects
Wholesome advice
From friends,
And does
What he likes,
Soon faces
Ruin and sorrow.

15 You molested
Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī
In the assembly hall.
She did not deserve this.
Her lineage is noble.
She faithfully follows
Every rule of dharma.

16 Son of Gāndhārī!
The mahā-bitter fruits today
Are the result
Of that act of adharma.
The punishment
For your crime
In this world
Is nothing
Compared to
The terrible punishment
That awaits you
In the *para-loka*,
The next world.

17 Not just this –
You defeated the Pāṇḍavas
Deviously
In the dice-game,
And ordered them
To forest-exile
Dressed in deerskin.

18 The Pāṇḍavas
Are like my own sons.
They faithfully
Follow the path of dharma.
Is there any Brahmin
In the world
Except me
Who will harm them?

19 You have earned
The wrath of the Pāṇḍavas.
Dhṛtarāṣṭra gave his assent.
Śakuni did the deed
In the assembly hall.

20 Duḥśāsana was your accomplice.
Karṇa fanned further
The flames of wrath,
And so did you
By ignoring
Again and again
The wise advice
Of Kṣattā-Vidura.

21 How cleverly
You manoeuvred
To encircle Arjuna!
Yet you all lost. Why?
You were protecting
The Sindhu-raja Jayadratha –
Yet he was killed!

22 You and Karṇa
Were alive.
Śalya and Aśvatthāman were alive.
So how did the Sindhu-rājā
Manage to die?

23 All the rājās
Combined their energies
To protect
The Sindhu-rājā Jayadratha.
Despite all their efforts,
He perished.

24 The earth-lord
Jayadratha
Depended on you,
Duryodhana,
And on me
To rescue him
From Arjuna.

25 But he failed
To get that protection
From us.
That being so,
I can see no place
Where I
Will be safe.

26 Until I kill
All the Pāñcālas
And Śikhaṇḍin,
I see myself slipping
Deeper and deeper
Into the clutches
Of Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

27 O Bharata scion!
You were unable
To save the Sindhu-rājā –
Why do you hurt me
With your arrow-sharp words?

28 How can you still
Hold out hopes
For your victory
When you no longer see
The golden war-flag
Of truth-firm Bhīṣma
Fluttering
On the battlefield?

29 When the Sindhu-ruler
Jayadratha
And Bhūriśravas
Were killed
Though protected
By mahā-chariot-heroes,
You can imagine
What the end will be.

30 Lord of the earth!
If near-invincible Kṛpa
Is still alive,
If he has escaped
The fate of the Sindhu-rājā,
I honour him
With my pūjā.

31 When I saw Bhīṣma,
The accomplisher
Of incredible exploits,
In the presence
Of your younger brother Duḥśāsana–

32 Bhīṣma whom even
All the gods
Led by Vāsava-Indra
Could not defeat –
When I saw him felled,
Then I realised, O king,
The world no longer
Belonged to you.

33 Look!
There in the distance,
O Bharata scion,
The Pāṇḍavas
And the Sṛñjayas
Jointly advancing
Towards me.

34 Son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra!
I will not remove my armour
Without first killing the Pāñcālas.
My karma in battle will be such
As to benefit you.

35

O rājā!
Go to my son Aśvatthāman
And tell him:
'No matter what,
Even at the risk of your life,
You must kill
All the Somakas.

36

Follow carefully
The advice
Given by your father.
Be firm in
Not brutalising others
Self-control
Truth
Simplicity

37

Practise dharma-artha-kāma
Prefer dharma-and-artha
But give priority to dharma.
Practise this advice
Again and again.

38

Offer pūjā
To the *vipra*
The learned
The seer
The singer
The visionary
With all your śakti
Be humble before them
Do nothing
To displease them
They are like fiery flames.'

39

O rājā! O foe-tormentor!
Pained by your word-arrows
I go now
To face your enemies
In the great war.

40 If you can, Duryodhana,
Protect your forces
Because the enraged Kurus and Sṛñjayas
Will fight even at night."

41 Like the sun
Eclipsing the splendour
Of the stars,
Droṇa eclipsed
The splendour of the Kṣatriyas
When he advanced
To battle the Pāṇḍavas
And Sṛñjayas.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-TWO

1 Rājā Duryodhana (continued Sañjaya),
addressed by Droṇa,
and roused to anger,
prepared his mind for battle.

2 Your son Duryodhana said
to Karṇa:
"See how diadem-decked Arjuna,
with Krishna's help,

3 Has penetrated the battle-formation
difficult for even gods to pierce.
In your and in mahā-ātmaned
Droṇa's presence,

4 And in the presence
Of other illustrious warriors,
The Sindhu-ruler Jayadratha
Has been killed:
Son of Rādhā!
See these kings,
So many lords of the earth,

5 Slain by
Pārtha-Arjuna singly,
Like small forest beasts
Killed by a lion
Though mahā-ātmaned Droṇa
And I
Did our best.

6 The son of Śakra-Indra,
Arjuna,
Has reduced my huge army
To a few.
With Droṇa to stop him,
How could Phālguna-Arjuna

7 Keep his vow
To kill the Sindhu-ruler?
He could not have pierced
The battle-formation
If Droṇa had done his utmost
To prevent him.

8 Rādhā's son!
Cast your eyes
On the battlefield
Strewn with the corpses
Of countless earth-lords
Slaughtered by Pārtha-Arjuna.
Each was as valiant
As Mahendra-Indra himself.

9 Brave one!
If Droṇa had really tried
To stop him,
Could Pāṇḍava Arjuna
Have succeeded in piercing
The battle-formation?

10 Exterminator of foes!
The truth is
Phālguna-Arjuna
Is very dear
To the mahā-ātmaned ācārya.
So, instead of fighting,
He graciously
Opened a door for Arjuna.

11 Look how helpless
And insecure and guṇa-less
He has made me!
Foe-chastising Droṇa
Tells the Sindhu-rājā
Not to fear
And conveniently
Opens a door for Kirīṭin-Arjuna!

12 All he had to do was ask
The Sindhu-rājā to go home,
And all this massacre
Could have been avoided.

13 Karṇa! My *sakhā*!
My loved-and-loving friend!
Jayadratha was in fact
On his way home
To save his life
When, fool that I am,
I relied on Droṇa's assurance
To him not to fear,
And I stopped him.

14 'I will protect
The Sindhu-rājā.
Phālguna-Arjuna
Cannot touch him.'
Saying this, the Brahmin
Stopped me, and my army
Was decimated.

15 Ill fortune followed me,
No matter how hard I tried.
My army was decimated,
Rājā Jayadratha was killed.

16 Karṇa!
Look at these hundreds
Of thousands of warriors –
All targets
Of Pārtha-Arjuna's arrows –
All despatched to the realm
Of Yama, god of death.

17 In front of our eyes,
From a single chariot,
Arjuna killed thousands
Of my warriors first,
Then Rājā Jayadratha.
How? How?

18 And today,
Before the very eyes
Of our wretched selves,
Citrasena
And my other brothers
Have been killed
By Bhīma."

19 Karṇa replied:
"Do not blame the ācārya.
That twice-born Brahmin,
Heedless of his life,
Is fighting for you
With all his śakti and prowess.

20 If white-horsed Śvetavāhana Arjuna
Was able to slip through
Our defences,
How can even the slightest blame
For that
Attach to the ācārya?

21 Accomplished
Skilful
Young
Brave
Alert and agile
Celestial-weapons-armed
Riding
His ape-bannered chariot

22 Driven by Krishna
Wearing impenetrable armour
Wielding his celestial
Never-obsolescent Gāṇḍīva-bow
Valiant

23 Arjuna
Proud-of-the-strength-of-his-arms
Shot his sharp arrows.
That he was able
To out-manoeuvre Droṇa
Should come as no surprise.

24 O rājā!
O lord of men!
The ācārya
Is an old man.
He cannot move
Swiftly
The śakti of his arms
Is not today
What it once was.

25 That is why
White-horsed Arjuna
Who has Krishna
As his charioteer
Was able
To slip past Droṇa
And penetrate your ranks.
It's not Droṇa's fault.

26 If you ask me,
The Pāṇḍavas cannot
Be defeated by Droṇa.
No matter how expert
He is in war-weapons
White-horsed Arjuna
Did out-manoeuvre him.

27 If you ask me,
What's fated, will happen
O Suyodhana-Duryodhana!
Though we tried
To the best of our śakti,

28 The Sindhu-ruler Jayadratha
Was killed.
Fate always, they say,
Has the last word.
We have made
Every possible effort
On the battlefield,

29 We have even resorted
To guile and deceit,
But fate has stepped in
And made futile
And pointless all
Our prowess and cunning.

30 You can do
Whatever you like,
But if fate
Is not on your side,
You will fail
Despite your best efforts
And skill.

31 Do your duty,
And do it fearlessly.
Whether what you do
Succeeds or fails –
That's in the hands of fare.

32 O Bharata!
With deceit
And with poison
We tricked the sons
Of Pṛthā-Kuntī.
We burnt them
In the lacquer house.
We cheated at dice.

33 We played politics
And sent them
Into forest-exile.
We did all we could
With careful design.
Fate stepped in
And ruined everything.

34 My suggestion is:
Defy fate –
And fight!
You do your best.
They will do their best.
And fate will do
What it will do.

35 O excellent Kaurava!
I do not see
The Pāṇḍavas doing anything
All that noble
Despite their intelligence,
And I do not see
You doing anything
All that ignoble
Despite your so-called lack of it.

36 Good deed or bad deed,
Fate's the ultimate arbiter.
Fate is always busy.
When all sleep, fate is awake.

37 At the commencement
Of the war,
Your warriors
Far outnumbered
The ranks of the Pāṇḍavas.

38 Despite their limited numbers,
They have wrought havoc
In your ranks.
If you ask me,
It is fare that has wrecked
All your hard work."

39 O lord of men!
While Karṇa and Duryodhana
Were discussing,
The Pāṇḍava forces
Were seen advancing.

40 O rājā! A fierce battle
Ensued between your son's horses
And elephants and theirs –
The result of your ill policy.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-THREE

1 Lord of men!
(continued Sañjaya)
The gigantic elephant division
Of your army
Spread confusion everywhere
In the Pāṇḍavas' ranks.

2 The Pāñcālas
And the Kauravas
Thought fiercely,
As if eager to go
To the other world,
The kingdom of Yama.

3 Heroes clashed with heroes,
Battling with
Arrows, lances and
*Śakti*-spears,
Despatching one another
To the above of Yama.

4 Chariot-heroes
Fought chariot-heroes.
Streams of blood
Flowed in the field
During that horrific clash.

5 Maharaja!
Raging elephants
Ripped each other
With their tusks.

6 Seeking glory,
Horse-riders
Wounded horse-riders
With darts,
*Śakti*-spears
And battle-axes.

7 O rājā!
Hundreds of foot-soldiers
Brandishing their weapons
Rushed furiously
Upon each other

8 *Māriṣa!* Respect-worthy lord!
The only way
To distinguish who
Was fighting who
In that confusion
Was by the names
And families and *gotras*
They shouted at each other.

9 The warriors roamed
Fearlessly
On the battlefield,
Despatching each other
To the next world
With arrows and darts
And battle-axes.

10 O rājā!
The sun had set,
And the thousands of arrows
No longer lit up
The ten cardinal directions.

11 O Bharata!
Maharāja!
While the Pāṇḍava forces
Were engaged
In these massive clashes,
Duryodhana entered
The thick of their ranks.

12 He was deeply pained
By the death
Of the Sindhu-ruler Jayadratha.
Determined to lay down his life
He entered
The Pāṇḍava ranks.

13 The reverberating rattle
Of his chariot
Made the earth
Tremble.
Your son
Rushed headlong
Into the Pāṇḍava ranks.

14 "Tell me," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"Droṇa
Kṛpa
Karṇa
Kṛtavarman of the Sātvatas –
They are well-wishers
Of Rājā Duryodhana –
Why did they not stop him?

15 Every possible means
Must be used
To protect an earth-lord.
Mahā-ṛṣis have declared this
To be the supreme principle
Of warfare.

16 Sañjaya!
When my son entered
The teeming ranks
Of his enemies,
What did my chariot-heroes
Decide to do?"

17 Rājā of the Bharatas!
(replied Sañjaya)
Listen to me
While I narrate
The astonishing battle
That took place
Between a lone warrior
And his countless opponents.

18 Ignoring the advice
Of Droṇa
Karṇa
And Kṛpa
Duryodhana plunged
Into the ocean.

19 Shooting thousands of arrows
Right and felt, he ensured
That his sharp shafts wounded
The Pāñcālas and the Pāṇḍavas.

20 Like the rising sun
Scattering with its rays
The darkness of night,
Your mahā-powerful son
Scattered his enemies.

21 Impossible to look
At the blazing rays
Of the high noon sun.
Equally impossible was it
To look at the arrow-
Scattering dazzle-ringed

22 Cousin-brother Duryodhana
Of the Pāṇḍavas
As he stood firm
On the battlefield.
They despaired,
They gave up
All hopes of victory,
They fled
Helter-skelter –

23 All the Pāñcālas –
From the fierce onslaught
Of mahā-ātmaned Duryodhana.
Struck by the gold-
Feathered arrows of
Your bow-expert son,

24 Many Pāṇḍava warriors,
Pierced to the marrow
By the sharp shafts,
Collapsed and died.
It was not in the power
Of the Pāṇḍava warriors
To accomplish such feats,

25 O lord of the earth,
As your son
Rājā Duryodhana performed
On the battlefield.
The Pāṇḍava ranks
Were crushed
By your son

26 Like beautiful lotuses
Trampled and shredded
By an elephant,
Like lotuses withering
When sun and wind
Dry up the water,

27 The Pāṇḍavas wilted
When their army faced
The irresistible energy
Of your son.
O Bharata!
Seeing the Pāṇḍavas
Assailed by your son,

28 The Pāñcālas,
With Bhīma at their head,
Advanced to attack.
Duryodhana wounded Bhīma
With ten arrows,
Mādrī's twin sons
With three each,

29 Virāṭa and Drupada
With six each,
Śikhaṇḍin with a hundred,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna with seventy,
And Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
With seven,

30 The Kekayas and Cedis
With any number
Of sharp arrows.
Wounding Sātvata Sātyaki
With five arrows,
Each of Draupadī's sons
With three,

31 And lacerating Ghaṭotkaca
On the battlefield,
He roared like a lion.
In that mahā-clash,
Hundreds
Of warriors
Along with their elephants

32 Were cut down
By wrathful Duryodhana
With his fierce arrows,
Like Antaka
The god of doom
Slaughtering creatures.
Harassed and sliced
By *śilimukha*-shafts,

33 Shot by your son
On the battlefield,
The Pāṇḍavas,
O lord of men,
Retreated.
In that mahā-
Arena of war,
The Kuru-rājā
Duryodhana,
Blazing
Like the sun
Itself,

34 So dazzled,
O rājā,
That the ranks
Of Pāṇḍu's sons
Dare not look at him.
O excelling rājā!
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
Bursting with anger,

35 Rushed upon
The Kuru-chief
Your son,
Bent on killing him.
The two foe-crushing
Warriors of the Kuru race,

36 Duryodhana and Yudhiṣṭhira,
Clashed, each seeking glory,
Moved by self-interest.
Infuriated Duryodhana
Was able
To wound Yudhiṣṭhira

37 With ten knotted arrows,
And shredded his flag
With a single shaft.
O king!
With three arrows
He lacerated the brow
Of Indrasena,

38 The charioteer so dear
To the mahā-ātmaned
Pāṇḍava Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira.
With another arrow
The mahā-chariot-hero
Duryodhana sliced
Yudhiṣṭhira's bow,

39 And with four more
Killed Yudhiṣṭhira's
Four chariot-horses.
In less time
Than the blink of an eyelid,
Infuriated Yudhiṣṭhira

40 Strung another bow
And with great alacrity
Blocked Kaurava Duryodhana.
Targeting the gold-
Worked bow of his foe
Duryodhana,

41 O respect-worthy lord,
The eldest Pāṇḍava
Yudhiṣṭhira
Sliced it in three fragments
With *bhalla*-arrows.
With ten well-
Aimed sharp arrows
He pierced Duryodhana,

42 The arrows sliding
Into the earth,
After penetrating his foe.
The fleeing Pāṇḍava warriors
Returned,
And surrounded Yudhiṣṭhira

43 Like the gods gathering
Round Puraṁdara-Indra
With the purpose
Of killing Vṛtra.
O respect-worthy lord!
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
Released an arrow
At your son
That blazed like sunrays –
A fearful missile!
Impossible to repulse!

44 With the words
"Hai! You are dead!"
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
Released that arrow.
Struck by that shaft
Released from a bow
Pulled fully ear-taut,
Grievously wounded Kaurava

45 Duryodhana slumped,
Dazed, half-conscious,
In the back of his chariot.
From the ranks
Of the Pāñcālas
Rose noisy exclamations

46 Of delight:
"The rājā is dead!"
O Indra-among-rājās!
O respect-worthy lord!
The air was filled
With the fearful
Whizzings of arrows.

47 Suddenly
Droṇa appeared
On the battlefield.
Duryodhana, delighted,
Brandished
His mighty bow
And shouting

48 "Stand still!
Don't move!
He counter-attacked
Pāṇḍu's son
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
Expecting to win,
The Pāñcālas
Advanced
And confronted him.

49 To protect
Finest-of-Kauravas
Duryodhana,
Drona faced them
Headlong,
Scattering
And destroying them,
Like the sun
Destroying clouds
Propelled
By strong winds.

50 O rājā!
What a battle it was!
A horrific carnage
Between your warriors
And the eager-to-fight
Enemy warriors.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FOUR

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"When angry and mighty
Ācārya Droṇa
Spoke to my son –
My foolish son
Who always spurns
My advice –
And entered
The ranks
Of the army
Of the Pāṇḍavas

2 How did the Pāṇḍavas
Face the brilliant
Bowman Droṇa
As he careened
Freely over the field
In his chariot?

3 Who protected
His right wheel
And who
His left
As the ācārya embarked
On his mission
Of mahā-slaughter?

4 And which brave warriors
Were the protectors
Of his rear?
Who were the enemies
Of Droṇa
Who faced his chariot
On the battlefield?

5 It seems to me
That his enemies
Must have felt
An unseasonal chill
Facing him.
Did they shiver
Like cows in winter?

6 That never-defeated
All-weapons-expert
Brilliant bowman
Bull-brave chariot-hero
Acāryā Droṇa
Seemed to be dancing
In his chariot
As he penetrated
The Pāñcāla ranks.

7 Like a shooting star
He consumed their warriors.
How could he have died,
This bull-brave chariot-hero?"

8 After killing
The Sindhu-ruler
(Sañjaya continued)
Pārtha-Arjuna consulted
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
And with the brilliant bowman
Sātyaki as his ally
Ḥe advanced against Droṇa.

9 Pāṇḍu's sons
Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma also
With their respective armies
Advanced against Droṇa.

10 Intelligent Nakula,
Difficult-to-defeat Sahadeva,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna with his army,
Virāṭa of the Kekayas,

11 The Matsya and Śālva warriors
Rushed upon Droṇa.
Protected by the Pāñcālas,
Rājā Drupada,

12 The father of Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Advanced
Against Droṇa,
O rājā.
The brilliant bowmen
Sons of Draupadī,
The Rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca,

13 Leading their armies,
Advanced against Droṇa
The resplendent hero.
The veteran six thousand
Prabhadrakas and Pāñcālas,

14 Led by Śikhaṇḍin,
Advanced against Droṇa.
Countless Pāṇḍava lions-among-men
And mahā-chariot-heroes

15 Advanced against Droṇa
The finest of the twice-born.
O bull-brave Bharata!
Even as these heroes advanced,

16 Pitch-dark night fell,
Enhancing the fears
Of the cowardly.
O rājā!
In that pitch dark
Jackals started howling,

17 Their gaping jaws
Blazing with terror.
O rājā!
A horrendous night,
A warrior-devouring night,

18 Spelling doom
For elephants
And horses
And humans.
Fearful owls screeched,

19 Atop Kaurava flagstaffs,
Foreboding calamity.
O Indra-among-rājās!
A commotion in the armies –

20 Drums thudding
Cymbals clashing
Elephants trumpeting
Horses neighing

21 Hooves thundering –
Reverberated
Across the battlefield.
The terrifying clash
Took place
That *saṁdhyā*-time,

22 O mahārāja,
Between Droṇa
And all the Sṛñjayas.
With pitch-darkness
Shrouding the earth,
Nothing could be seen

23 In the dust-
Filled blackness.
Human-blood and horse-blood
And elephant-blood mingled

24 Caking the dust-particles
Into invisibility.
All life seemed to be
In a coma.
Like the crackle
Of bamboos
In a mountain forest-fire
At night,

25 Rose the dreadful noise
Of weapon
Striking weapon –
*Caṭā-caṭa*!
*Mṛdaṅga*-kettle drums
*Anaka*-drums
*Jharjhara*-drums
*Paṭaha*-drums

26 Shouting and screaming of warriors
Neighing of horses –
Impossible to tell friend from foe
In the confusion . . .

27 Madness possessed everyone
In that deep darkness.
O Indra-among-rājās!
Profuse streams of blood
Smoothed
The upraised dust.

28 The sheen
Of golden armours
And body-ornaments
Flickered in the gloom.
Resplendent with gems
And gold jewellery,
The ranks
Of the Bharata army,

29 O bull-brave Bharata,
Scintillated like a
Star-spangled night-sky.
*Śakti*-spears and war-flags
Scattered everywhere,
Jackals howling,

30 Elephants trumpeting,
Soldiers clashing
And yelling –
A gruesome scene!
Horripilating –
The mahā-cacophony
And chaos and carnage!

31 All the directions
Reverberated
As if struck with the thunder
Of Mahendra-Indra!
Mahārāja!
The Bharata warriors
Lit up the night

32 With their armlets
Glittering
Their ear-rings
Sparkling
Their weapons shining.
Gold-decked chariots and elephants

33

Dazzled
Like clouds
Streaked with lightning
*Ṛṣṭi*-swords
*Śakti*-spears
Maces
Arrows
Clubs
*Prāsa*-javelins
Three-pointed *paṭṭiśa*-spears

34

And other weapons
Looked like blazing sparks
Wherever they fell.
Duryodhana the wind
Preceding
A thunderstorm –
Chariots
And elephants
The dark
Cloud-masses –

35

The noise
Of the martial
Musical instruments
The thunder –
Bows and war-flags
The lightning-flashes –
Droṇa and the Pāṇḍavas
The rain-god Parjanya –
Swords
*Śakti*-spears
And maces
The thunderbolts –

36

Blazing and freezing
Volleys of arrows
And other missiles
The sweeping winds –
Gory and fierce
And awesome
That no-escape-possible
Fatal clash.

37 Eager to fight,
Warriors fearlessly
Entered the thick
Of the battle
That dreadful night
Reverberating
With a mahā-uproar.

38 And as the battle
Continued
Through the night,
Bringing terror
To cowards,
And delight
To the valiant,

39 The Pāṇḍavas and Sṛñjayas
Infuriated
Rushed together at Droṇa.
O rājā!
All the mahā-chariot-heroes
Who attacked him

40 Were repulsed
And despatched
To the realm of Yama
God of death.
A thousand elephants
Ten thousand chariot-heroes

41 Hundreds of thousands
Of foot-soldiers
And horse-riders
Were killed that might
By the *nārāca*-arrows
Of Droṇa.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FIVE

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"When incomparably powerful
and unvanquishable Droṇa
pierced the ranks of the Sṛñjayas,
how did you feel?

2 When,
After speaking
To my disobedient son,
*śāstra*-spurning Duryodhana,
The incomparably puissant
Droṇa penetrated
The enemy ranks,
What did Pārtha-Arjuna do?

3 After the slaughter
Of the heroic Sindhu-ruler
Jayadratha
And Bhūriśravas,
Invincible and mahā-energetic
Droṇa penetrated
The Pāñcāla ranks.

4 What did Duryodhana think
Of this feat
Of foe-scorching Droṇa?
What did Duryodhana
Plan next?

5 Who were the followers
Of born-bestowing
Finest-of-the-twice-born
Droṇa?
Who were the warriors
Who protected
His rear?

6 When he was busy
Destroying his enemies,
Who protected
His vanguard?
I have a feeling
That the Pāṇḍavas,
Harassed by the arrows
Of Bharadvāja's son Droṇa

7 Trembled, *prabhu* lord,
Like skinny cows in the cold of winter.
Having penetrated the Pāñcāla ranks,
How did the foe-vanquishing,
Lion-among-men brilliant bowman die?

8 That night
When one by one
The foot-soldiers
And the mahā-chariot-heroes
Were being killed,
Which sensible warriors
Among you were able
To remain calm and sober?

9 You keep telling me
In every encounter my warriors
Were either killed
Or they fled
Or were unchorioted

10 Or mutilated
And rendered senseless
By the Pāṇḍavas.
All drowned
In that dark night.
How did that affect
My army's morale?

11 You keep telling me
The Pāṇḍavas rejoiced
The Pāṇḍavas advanced
The Pāṇḍavas succeeded
And my warriors
Were dispirited
And struck with fear.

12 Sañjaya!
Tell me:
How was it possible
In that pitch-dark right
To distinguish between
The never-retreating sons
Of Pṛthā-Kuntī
And my own Kauravas?"

13 Sañjaya replied:
Rājā, in that gory right battle
The Pāṇḍavas joining forces
With the Somakas
Attacked Droṇa.

14 With swift-speeding arrows
Droṇa despatched
The sons of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
And the Kekayas
To the realm
Of the *preta*-spirits.

15 O Bharata-descendant!
O rājā!
All the mahā-chariot-heroes
Who attacked him –
He despatched them
To the *pitṛ*-realm
Of departed ancestors.

16 While the mahā-chariot-hero
Son of Bharadvāja
Droṇa
Was routing his attackers,
The illustrious rājā Śibi
Charged against him
In a fit of rage.

17 Seeing that
Mahā-chariot-hero
Of the Pāṇḍavas
Rushing towards him,
Droṇa blocked him
With ten arrows
Made of pure iron.

18 Śibi retaliated
With thirty arrows,
And smiling
Killed his charioteer
With a broad-
Headed *bhalla*-arrow.

19 Droṇa killed
The chariot's horses,
Then the charioteer;
Then he killed
Mahā-ātmaned Śibi
By severing his head
From his body.

20 Duryodhana ordered
A new charioteer
For Droṇa.
With a new charioteer
At the reins,
Droṇa attacked
His foes afresh.

21 Because his father
Had been killed
In an encounter
By Bhīma,
The Kaliṅga-ruler's son
Attacked Bhīma
With a strong free
Of Kaliṅga warriors.

22 He wounded Bhīma
With five, then with seven shafts.
He wounded Bhīma's charioteer Viśoka
With three, and sliced
His war-flag with one.

23 Infuriated,
Wolf-waisted Bhīma
Leapt from his chariot
Into the chariot
Of the Kaliṅga prince,
And pummelled him
With fierce blows.

24 Shattered by the blows
Of powerful Bhīma,
The bones
Of the Kaliṅga prince
Thudded one by one
On the ground.

25 O foe-chastiser!
The prince's brothers
And Karṇa,
Unable to bear this,
Wounded Bhīma
With a shower
Of snake-venom arrows.

26 Bhīma left the chariot
Of his enemy
And climbed
Into the chariot of Dhruva.
He killed Dhruva
With a single blow.

27 That blow
Of the powerful son
Of Pāṇḍu
Knocked Dhruva
Out of his chariot.
Mahārāja!
Having killed Dhruva,
Mahā-powerful Bhīma

28 Climbed into
The chariot of Jayarāta
And roared his lion-cry,
Boxing Jayarāta
With his left fist
And knocking him down.

29 Then he went and stood
In front of Karṇa.
Karṇa hurled
A golden *śakti*-spear
At him.

30 Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma
Reached out
And seized it;
Smiling, wolf-waisted
Vṛkodara-Bhīma
Hurled the same spear
Back at Karṇa.

31 An oiled arrow
Shot by Śakuni
Sliced the spear
As it sped swiftly.
Performing such
Mahā-marvellous feats
On the field
Of battle,

32 Bhīma returned to his chariot
And continued
To afflict your ranks.
Seeing enraged Bhīma
Like Antaka the god of doom
Bent on annihilating
Your warriors,

33 O lord of the world,
Your mahā-chariot-hero sons
Tried frustrating him
With a deluge of arrows
That obscured the sky.

34 Smiling,
Bhīma shot arrows
That sent Durmada's charioteer
And his horses to Yama's realm.

35 Durmada climbed
Into the chariot of Duṣkarṇa.
The two foe-tormenting brothers
In the same chariot

36 Sped towards Bhīma
Headlong,
Like the lord-of-waters
Ambupati-Varuṇa
And Mitra
When they attacked
The Daitya Tāraka.

37 Your sons
Durmada and Duṣkarṇa,
From one chariot,
Kept up a steady shower
Of fierce arrows
At Bhīma.

38 In the presence of
Karṇa
Aśvatthāman
Kṛpa
Somadatta
And Bāhlīka,
The Pāṇḍava

39 Foe-crushing Bhīma
Kicked the chariot
Of Durmada
And Duṣkarṇa
And overturned it.

40 Pummelling
Your two brave
And powerful sons
Durmada and Duṣkarṇa,
Enraged Bhīma
Battered them to death,
And roared
His war-cry.

41 "Hai! Hai!"
Wailed your warriors.
Seeing Bhīma,
The kings said:
"Rudra-Śiva himself
Has become Bhīma killing
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons."

42 O Bharata!
Saying this,
The lords of the earth,
Stupefied,
Spurred their mounts
And fled the field,
Singly, helter-skelter,
Not even in twos.

43 Crushing the army
Of the Kauravas
In that first night-battle,
The mahā-powerful hero
With eyes
Like full-blown lotuses
Offered respectful pūjā
To king Yudhiṣṭhira,
And received
The praise-pūjā of kings
Honouring the bull-brave
Wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma.

44 The twins
Nakula and Sahadeva
And Drupada
Virāṭa
And the Kekayas
And Yudhiṣṭhira
Delightedly praised
The victory,
And offered
The wolf-waisted hero
The same praise-pūjā
That was offered
By the gods
To Hara-Śiva
When he killed Andhaka.

45 Your sons, resembling Varuṇa's sons,
Infuriated and eager to fight,
Under the command of their guru mahātmā,
Encircled wolf-waisted Bhīma
With chariots, foot-soldiers and elephants.

46 Nakula and Sahadeva,
Reinforced by the armies
Of Drupada' sons,
Yudhiṣṭhira, Drupada, Virāta, Sāṭyaki,
And the Sṛñjayas confronted your sons.

47 O finest of kings!
What a battle it was that night
That dreadful dark-cloud night
With all the mahā-ātmaned warriors fighting
To the delight
Of wolves and crows and valtures!

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SIX

1 Sañjaya continued:
Enraged that his son
Bhūriśravas was killed
While in *prāyopaviṣṭa,*
The fasting-and-serenely-dying vow,
Somadatta said to Sātyaki:

2 "O Sātvata!
How is it that you
Gave up the Kṣatriya-dharma
Ordained by gods and mahātmās
And delight in the dharma
Of thieves and robbers?

3 How can a person
Dedicated to Kṣatriya-dharma
Butcher in battle
A fleeing warrior
A helpless warrior
A weaponless warrior
Or a warrior begging for mercy?
Tell me, Sātyaki.

4 O Sātvata!
I am told
That among the Vṛṣṇis
Are two unparalleled
Mahā-chariot-heroes:
Mahā-muscled Pradyumna
And yourself.

5 Why did you commit
Such a vicious, hell-deserving crime
Against one whose arm was cut off
By Pārtha-Arjuna, and who
Had taken the *prāyopaviṣṭa*-vow?

6 Wicked fool!
You will reap
The fruits of your karma
Today on the battlefield.
I will slice your head
With a single arrow!

7 O Sātvata!
I vow by my two sons
I vow by all I hold dear
I vow by my deeds of merit
That before the night passes
I will kill you
Who pride yourself on your valour,

8 Together with your sons
And younger brothers,
If you are left unprotected
By Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Jiṣṇu-Arjuna.
O Vṛṣṇi scoundrel!
If I fail to do so,
May the worst hell be mine!"

9 Anger-inflamed
Mahā-powerful Somadatta
Said this,
Blew his conch
And roared
His leonine war-cry.

10 Lotus-petal-eyed
Lion-tooth-fierce
Difficult-to-defeat
Infuriated Sātyaki said
To Somadatta:

11 "Kaurava!
Whether I fight you
Or any other,
I fear no one.

12 Kaurava!
Do your worst!
With all your warriors,
Do your worst!
I shall feel no pain.

13 I am a Kṣatriya.
I know how a Kṣatriya
Should behave.
To fight
Is in my blood.
I am honoured
Even by the ill-minded.
Your empty words
Don't frighten me.

14 Lord of men!
If you want to fight me,
Shoot your arrows
Mercilessly at me.
And I will shoot back.

15 Mahārāja!
Your mahā-chariot-hero son
Bhūriśravas
Is dead.
Grieving over his brother's death
Śala also is no more.

16 Now I will kill
You and your sons
And your followers.
You are a Kaurava
Mahā-chariot-hero.
But beware today your fate
On the battlefield.

17 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
Has all the virtues
That remain forever:
Charity
Self-control
Purity
Ahiṁsā
Humility
Patience
*Kṣamā*-fortitude.

18 Consider yourself, Karṇa and Śakuni
Already killed today by energetic
*Mṛdaṅga*-drum-flagged Yudhiṣṭhira.

19 I swear by Krishna-*caraṇa*
I swear
By the lotus-feet of Krishna
I swear by *iṣṭāpūrta*
By the merit of the good deeds
I have done in the past –
May I never find peace
If I fail to kill today
Scoundrelly you and your sons!

20 If despite what you have said
You choose to run away,
You may still live."
Addressing each other
In this manner,
Their eyes red with rage,

21 The two excellent men
Showered arrows
On each other.
With a thousand chariots
And ten thousand elephants,

22 Duryodhana
Surrounded Somadatta
In order to protect him.
Anger-inflamed
And all-weapons-armed
Śakuni

23 Did the same,
Assisted by his sons,
Grandsons and brothers –
All as valiant
As Indra himself.
Your young brother-in-law,
Mahā-muscled Śakuni,
Gifted with a thunderbolt
Powerful body,

24 Intelligent Śakuni
Encircled the brilliant bowman
Somadatta
With more than
A hundred thousand cavalry.

25 Protected
By these brave allies,
Somadatta shrouded Sātyaki
With arrow-showers.
Seeing Sātyaki enveloped
By these arrow-showers,

26 Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Filled with anger,
Turned up with a large army.
Like the noise of waters
Lashed by a storm,

27 O rājā,
A chaotic clash
Took place.
Somadatta wounded Sātyaki
With nine arrows,

28 And Sātyaki wounded
The bull-brave Kaurava with nine.
Grievously injured
By the brilliant bowman Sātyaki,

29 Somadatta slumped
In his chariot,
Semi-conscious.
Seeing him in that state,
His charioteer
Hurriedly

30 Drove away
With the brave
Mahā-chariot-hero
Somadatta.
Seeing him rendered
Near-senseless
By the arrows
Of Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,

31 Droṇa, eager
To kill the Yādava
Hero Sātyaki,
Rushed at him.
Seeing Droṇa,
Yudhiṣṭhira, leading his warriors,

32 With the aim
Of saving the finest-
Of-the-Yadavas Sātyaki,
Completely encircled Droṇa.
Then began the battle
Between Droṇa
And the Pāṇḍavas,

33 Resembling the battle
In the distant past
Between the gods
And king Bali
For the lordship
Of the three worlds.
Drenching the Pāṇḍavas
With arrow-showers,

34 The mahā-energetic
Son of Bharadvāja
Wounded Yudhiṣṭhira.
Wounding Sātyaki with ten arrows,
Pṛṣata's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna with twenty,

35 Mahā-muscled Droṇa
Wounded Draupadī's sons
With five each,
The Matsya king Virāṭa
With eight,
Drupada with ten,

36 Bhīma with nine,
Nakula with five,
Sahadeva with eight,
Śikhaṇḍin with a hundred,

37 Yudhāmanyu with three,
Uttamaujas with six,
Besides many other warriors
Who were allies of Yudhiṣṭhira.

38 O rājā!
Ravaged
By the attack of Droṇa,
The warriors
Of the sons of Pāṇḍu
Fled in all the ten directions.

39 The spectacle
Of his army
Getting decimated
By Droṇa
Angered Phālguna-Arjuna somewhat,
And he advanced
To attack his guru.

40 Seeing dreadful-deed-doing
Bībhatsu-Arjuna
Advancing towards Droṇa,
The soldiers of Yudhiṣṭhira
Returned and re-grouped.

41 A tremendous battle
Commenced between
Droṇa
The son of Bharadvāja
And the Pāṇḍavas.
O rājā!
Surrounded and protected
By your sons, Droṇa

42 Swept through
The Pāṇḍava warriors
Like fire
Through dry cotton.
He dazzled
Like the blazing sun,
Like a massive
Resplendent fire.

43 O rājā!
Seeing Droṇa
Shooting arrows
From a bow drawn
Full maṇḍala-circle –
Fire-scalding arrows
Shot by a scorching sun –

44 Devouring his foes,
The Pāṇḍavas were helpless
To stop him.
Whoever dared to come
In front of Droṇa

45 Was beheaded by Droṇa
With arrows which
After decapitating
Slid into the earth.
Massacred by the attack
Of mahā-ātmaned Droṇa,
The army

46 Of the Pāṇḍavas
Scattered in fear
Before the very eyes
Of ambidexterous
Savyasācī-Arjuna.
O Bharata descendant!
Seeing his warriors
Panicking that night,

47 Jiṣṇu-Arjuna said to Govinda-Krishna:
"Drive me near Droṇa's chariot."
Beautiful horses – silver-white,
Cow-milk-white, *kunda*-flower-white,
Moon-white –

48 Were driven by
The Dāśārha chief Krishna
Who sped the chariot towards Droṇa.
Seeing the chariot
Of Phālguna-Arjuna
Rushing towards Droṇa,
Bhīma

49 Ordered
His own charioteer:
"Drive me to Droṇa!"
As commanded,
His charioteer Viśoka
Manoeuvred the horses,

50 O finest of the Bharatas,
Behind true-vowed
Jiṣṇu-Arjuna.
Seeing
The two Pāṇḍava brothers
Advancing
Towards Droṇa's army,

51 The Pāñcālas
Sṛñjayas
Matsyas
Cedis
Kārūṣas
Kosalas
Kekayas –
All of them
Mahā-chariot-heroes –
Advanced also,
Behind them,
O mahārāja.

52 O rājā!
A horrendous
Horripilating
Battle took place.
Dreadful-deed-doing Bībhatsu-Arjuna
Attacked the right flank
And wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma
The left flank of your army

53 With swarms of chariots
Supported
By hosts of warriors
On the side
Of the two brothers.
Seeing
Lion-among-men Bhīma
And Dhanañjaya-Arjuna

54 Proceeding towards Droṇa,
Mahā-powerful Sātyaki
And Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Did the same.
Like reverberating waves
Lashed by storms,

55 The opposing armies
Clashed
In thunderous tumult.
Seeing Sātyaki,
And enraged at Sātyaki's
Slaughter of Somadatta's son,

56 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Rushed at the Sātvata Sātyaki
Bent, O rājā,
On killing him.
Seeing Aśvatthāman
Advancing at the chariot
Of Śini's grandson Sātyaki,

57 Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca,
In a fit of rage,
Blocked his foe's path.
Ghaṭotkaca was in a
Massive iron chariot,
A mahā-vehicle
Covered with bear-skins,

58 Thirty *nalvas*
In length and breadth,
Full three thousand cubits
Of space inside –
Loaded with mechanical devices,
Rumbling like mahā-thunder-clouds –

59 Pulled by beasts
That looked like elephants
But were neither
Elephants nor horses.
Wings outstretched,
Eyes glaring,
A shrieking

60 Rāja-vulture
Perched on its flagstaff.
Its war-flag
Was blood-drenched,
Bone-and-intestine garlands
Were its decorations.

61 In that huge
Eight-wheeled chariot,
Protected by
Spears
Clubs
Mountain-rocks
Entire trees

62 In the hands
Of fearful rākṣasas
Guarding it,
Sat Ghaṭotkaca
Accompanied by
An *akṣauhiṇī* of such guards.
Seeing him advancing
With his bow raised high,
The kings were terrified,

63 For he looked like
Antaka the god of doom
With his punishing rod
At the time
Of universal dissolution,
Yugānta, the end-of-a-yuga.
He looked
Like a towering
Mountain-peak,
Awe-inspiring,
Fear-instilling.

64 Fang-like teeth
Hideous face
Ears like *śaṅku*-arrows
High cheek-bones
Unpraised head-hair
Slanted eyes
Flaming mouth
Sunken stomach

65 Elongated gullet
Like a huge pit
Diademed head
Of-thick-locks
The terror
Of all creatures
Yawning jaws
Like god-of-death Antaka's . . .

66 Seeing the flaming Indra-
Of-rākṣasas Ghaṭotkaca
Advancing with uplifted bow
To terrorise his foes,

67 The armies
Of your son Duryodhana
Trembled and panicked
Like the waves
Of the Gaṅgā
Swirling into whirlpools
When agitated
By a lashing storm.

68 Terrified
By the leonine roars
Of Ghaṭotkaca,
The elephants
Urinated,
And dismay
Gripped the warriors.

69 At *saṁdhyā*-twilight
Showers of huge stones
Hurled by the rākṣasas
Thudded
On the battlefield.

70 Shower upon shower
Of iron *cakras*
*Bhuśuṇḍi*-fire-arms
*Prāsa*-darts
*Tomara*-javelins
Arrows
*Śataghni*-fire-missiles
*Paṭṭiśa*-battle-axes
Fell continuously . . .

71 Caught in the thick
Of that horrendously
Fearful onslaught,
The rulers of men,
Your sons
And Karṇa
Fled in dire distress.

72 Only Droṇa's proud son Aśvatthāman,
Confident of his weapons-expertise,
Remained unaffected. With his arrows
He frustrated Ghaṭotkaca's māyā.

73 Infuriated
By the dissipation
Of his maya,
Ghaṭotkaca
Fired fierce arrows
Which penetrated
Aśvatthāman's body.

74 Like roused snakes
Swiftly slipping
Inside an ant-hill,
The arrows pierced
The body of the son
Of Śaradvati-Kṛpi
Drenching him with blood,

75 And then the stone-
Sharpened gold-feathered
Shafts slid into the earth.
Infuriated and blood-drenched
Illustrious Aśvatthāman,
With great dexterity,

76 In a fit of anger,
Wounded Ghaṭotkaca
With ten arrows.
Struck by Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman
In his vital organs,
Ghaṭotkaca,

77 In searing pain,
Raised aloft a wheel
With a hundred thousand spokes,
The rim of which
Was razor-sharp,
Which was gem-and-diamond-
Studded, and dazzled
Like the dawning sun.

78 Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca
Hurled the wheel
At Aśvatthāman to kill him,
But Droṇa's son sliced it
In swift midflight with arrows

79 And it crashed
Into nothingness
On the ground,
Like the hopes
Of an ill-fated dreamer.
Seeing his wheel
Disintegrated and brought down,
Ghaṭotkaca quickly

80 Obscured Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman
With his arrows
Like the demon Svarbhānu
Eclipsing the sun.
Ghaṭotkaca's splendid son
Śrīmān Añjanaparvā who resembled
A mass of lampblack

Transcreated by P. Lal

81 Stopped Aśvatthāman's advance
Like the mountain-rājā Himālaya
Blocking the wind. Bhima's grandson
Añjanaparvā, arrow-shrouded,

82 Obscured Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman
With arrow-showers
Making Aśvatthāman
Look like Meru mountain
Drenched with rain-clouds.
Enraged Aśvatthāman
Whose prowess equalled that
Of Rudra-Śiva
Or Upendra or Indra

83 Splintered Añjanaparvā's flagstaff
With one arrow,
Killed both his charioteers
With two arrows,
And with three more
Shattered his Triveṇu chariot.

84 With four he killed
The four horses.
The gold-*bindu* sword
Of unchărioted Añjanaparvā,

85 Was sliced in two
With a single sharp arrow.
O rājā!
Hiḍimbā's grandson Añjanaparvā
Brandished
A gold-decorated mace

86 And whirled and flung it
At Aśvatthāman,
But Droṇa's son's
Arrows struck it in mid-flight
And it thudded
On the ground.
Bounding up like
A black cloud
Of Kāla-doomsday,

87 Añjanaparvā hurled
Showers of tree-trunks
From the sky. But Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman pierced the māyā-
Mongering son of Ghaṭotkaca

88 With sky-shooting shafts
Like the rays of the sun
Piercing through clouds.
Sitting in his gold-
Decorated chariot,
When that giant
Of incredible energy,

89 Looking like a mountain
Of lamp-black,
Descended on the earth –
Then Droṇa's black-armoured son
Aśvatthāman slew
Bhīma's son
Añjanaparvā

90 Like Maheśvara-Śiva
Slaying
The anti-god Andhaka.
Seeing his mahā-powerful
Son Añjanaparvā
Killed by Aśvatthāman,

91 Ghaṭotkaca, resplendent
With dazzling body-ornaments,
Approached wrathfully
Śaradvatī's brave son Aśvatthāman,
And said calmly to him.

92 Who was consuming
The Pāṇḍava army
With the ferocity
Of a raging forest fire:
"Son of Droṇa!
Wait! Stay where you are!
You cannot escape
From me!

93 I will destroy you
In the same way
That Agni's son Kārtikeya
Shattered the Krauñca mountain."
Aśvatthāman retorted:
"O brave god-like son!
Go fight others.

94 It is not right
For a son
To fight his father,
O son of Hiḍimbā.
O son of Hiḍimbā!
I do not nurse
The least grudge against you.

95 But keep in mind
That in a fit of anger
A man is capable
Of harming even himself."
Hearing these words
(Sañjaya continued)
Bhīma's son, filled with grief
Over his son's death,

96 His eyes copper-red
With wrath, said
To Aśvatthāman:
"Son of Droṇa! Do you think
I am one of those cowards

97 Who get frightened
By words?
Your words are despicable.
I am Bhīma's son.
My lineage is the grand
Lineage of the Kurus.

98 I am a son
Of the Pāṇḍavas
Who never flee in battle.
I am the rājā
Of the rākṣasas.
I possess the strength
Of ten-headed Rāvaṇa.

99
Stay where you are
Droṇa's son!
Wait for me
To end your life!
I'll vapourise
All your *śraddhā*
For battle today!"

100
Saying this,
The mahā-powerful rākṣasa,
His eyes copper-red
With anger,
Swooped on Droṇa's son
Like a lion charging
An Indra-among-elephants.

101
Like a cloud
Pouring a rain-deluge
On a mountain,
Ghaṭotkaca rained arrows
At the axle of the chariot
Of the bull-brave chariot-hero
Son of Droṇa.

102
But Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman frustrated
That arrow-shower with
A shower of his own.
The interspace sky became a battleground
Of arrows striking arrows.

103
Sparks flashed in the sky
In that clash of arrows,
Like fireflies flitting
In a pitch-dark night.

104
Seeing his māyā
Frustrated
By battle-proud
Aśvatthāman,
Ghaṭotkaca made himself
Invisible
And fabricated
Another māyā.

105 He became:
A massive mountain
Resplendent
With towering peaks and trees,
From which streamed
Spears and lances
And swords and clubs
Like a gushing fountain.

106 Seeing that massive
Coal-black mountain
Vomiting
A ceaseless flow
Of wounding weapons,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Kept calm.

107 Smiling,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Invoked and materialised
The Vajra-thunderbolt missile.
Under the impact
Of that missile,
The mountain-Indra Ghaṭotkaca
Swiftly dematerialised.

108 He re-materialised in the shape
Of a gigantic blue cloud
Complete with rainbow
And showered Droṇa's son
With huge boulders.

109 Discharging
The Vāyavya Wind-Missile
The arms-expert hero
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Dissipated
The blue cloud.

110 Riddling
All the ten directions
With his arrows,
The finest-of-two-legged-beings
Aśvatthāman annihilated
A hundred thousand chariot-heroes.

111 He saw
Ghaṭotkaca
Unaffected
Brandishing his bow
Advancing fearlessly
Towards him
Supported by a host
Of rākṣasas

112 With lion-forms
And tiger-forms
And as fierce
As musth elephants –
Riding in chariots
Or on elephant-back
And horseback –

113 With weird faces
And heads and necks –
All followers
Of the son of Hiḍimbā,
Belonging to the Pulastya
Yātudhāna and Tāmasa tribes,
Equalling Indra in valour,

114 Wielding various weapons,
Clad in varied armours,
Variously ornamented,
Mahā-powerful,
Eyes rolling
In violent anger . . . .

115 Supported by hordes
Of difficult-to-defeat
Rākṣasas, Ghaṭotkaca
Advanced to attack.
Seeing them, your son
Duryodhana became depressed.
Drona's son Aśvatthāman reassured him:

116 "Duryodhana!
Stay here
With your brave brothers
And earth-lords
Equalling Indra in prowess.

117 O rājā!
I will wipe out your enemies.
You cannot be defeated.
I promise you this.
Rally your forces."

118 Duryodhana replied:
"Gautamī-nandana!
O son of Gautama's daughter!
You have a large heart.
What you say
Is wonderful.
You have such bhakti
For us."

119 Having said this
To Aśvatthāman
(continued Sañjaya),
Duryodhana said
To Subala's son Śakuni
Who looked resplendent
On the battlefield
With thousands of chariots:

120 "With sixty thousand chariots
Attack Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
Karṇa and Vṛṣasena
And Kṛpa and Nīla

121 And the northern warriors
Kṛtavarman
Purumitra
Sutāpana
Duḥśāsana
Nikumbha
Kuṇḍabhedi
Illustrious

122 Puraṁjaya
Dṛḍharatha
Patāki
Hemakampana
Śalya
Āruṇi
Indrasena
Sañjaya
Vijaya
Jaya –
All these
And others –

123 Kamalākṣa
Parakrāthī
Jayavarman
Sudarśana –
All these heroes
With sixty thousand foot-soldiers
Will reinforce you.

124 *Mātula*!
Like Devendra-Indra
Destroying the anti-gods;
Destroy Bhīma
The twins Nakula and Sahadeva
And Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira.
All my hopes
Rest in you.

125 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman's arrows
Have already mutilated them.
*Mātula*! Destroy Kuntī's sons now
Like Agni's son Pāvaki-Kārtikeya
'Destroying the anti-gods."

126 Ordered by your son,
Subala's son Śakuni,
To please your son,
O rājā,
Advanced swiftly
To fight the Pāṇḍavas.

127 The battle that night
Between Ghaṭotkaca
And Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Resembled
The gory clash in the past
Between Śakra-Indra
And Prahlāda.

128 Infuriated Ghaṭotkaca
Struck Aśvatthāman,
The son
Of the daughter of Gautama,
In the chest
With ten snake-venomed
And fire-fierce arrows.

129 Seriously wounded
By these arrows shot
By Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca,
Aśvatthāman swayed
In his chariot
Like a tree
Battered by a storm.

130 With an *añjalika* arrow
Ghaṭotkaca
Splintered the radiant bow
In the hands
Of Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman.

131 Stringing another bow
Able to withstand
Extreme strain,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
Released
A deluge of arrows
Like a cloud pouring rain.

132 Gautamī's son
Aśvatthāman
Released a volley
Of gold-feathered
Sky-speeding
Foe-annihilating arrows,
O Bharata.

133 The hordes
Of broad-chested rākṣasas,
Lacerated
By the arrow-volley,
Looked
Like a herd of elephants
Mauled by a lion.

134 Like the fire-god
Bhagavān Agni
Consuming creatures
At the end of a yuga,
Aśvatthāman consumed horses,
Charioteers, chariots, elephants, rākṣasas.

135 O king!
Annihilating an *akṣauhiṇī*
Of rākṣasas
With his arrows,
Aśvatthāman shone gloriously
Like Maheśvara-Śiva
Annihilating Tripura
In the sky
In the distant past.

136 He shone
Droṇa's son shone
He was resplendent
After annihilating his foes
Like the dazzling
Vasu-doomsday-fire consuming
Creatures at yuga-end.

137 Enraged Ghaṭotkaca ordered
His hordes of horror-working rākṣasas:
"Go!
Kill the son of Droṇa!"

138 Obeying the order
Of Ghaṭotkaca,
The host of rākṣasas
With blazing teeth
Enormous faces
Horrendous bodies

139 Gaping mouths
Lolling tongues
Wrath-red eyes
Made the earth quake
With their
Leonine roars

140 And with multifarious
War weapons
Attacked Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman with intent to kill.
*Śakti*-spears and *śataghni*-fire-missiles
*Parigha*-bludgeons and *aśani*-missiles
*Śūla*-lances
*Paṭṭiśa*-battle-axes

141 Swords
Maces
*Bhindipāla*-hand-arrows
*Mausala*-clubs
*Paraśu*-hatchets
*Prāsa*-darts
*Tomara*-Javelins
*Kaṇapa*-missiles
Sharp *kampana*-weapons

142 Huge boulders
*Bhuśundi*-fire-arms
*Gadā*-clubs
Black iron poles
*Mudgara*-hammers
And other maha-gory
Foe-exterminating weapons

143 Were showered on the head
Of Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
By hundreds of thousands of
Anger-inflamed horrific rākṣasas.

144 Witnessing
That tremendous shower
Of deadly weapons
On the head
Of Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
Your warriors
Became despondent.

145 But the mahā-minded son
Of Droṇa fearlessly
Neutralised those weapons
With arrows of his own,
Stone-sharpened
And thunderbolt-fierce.

146 With gold-feathered arrows
And many other
Celestial mantra-charged weapons,
The mahā-minded son
Of Droṇa
Succeeded in wounding
The rākṣasas.

147 Wounded by his arrows,
The hordes
Of broad-chested rākṣasas
Looked like a herd
Of elephants
Mauled by a lion.

148 O Bharata!
Afflicted by Droṇa's son,
The mahā-powerful hordes
Of rākṣasas,
Inflamed with anger
And bent on killing him,
Re-grouped
And attacked Aśvatthāman.

149 O Bharata!
Such incredible feats
Were performed then
By Droṇa's son –
Impossible for any other creature
To equal them.

150 Singlehanded,
The son of Droṇa
Well-versed in war-weapons
Spread havoc
With his blazing arrows
In the ranks of the rākṣasas
In the very presence
Of the rākṣasa-Indra Ghaṭotkaca.

151 Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman
Dazzled on the field
While routing the rākṣasas
Like the Samvartaka fire
Of final doom
At the end of a yuga.

152 As he ravaged the ranks
Of the rākṣasas
With snake-venom arrows,
Among the thousands of rājās
Supporting the Pāṇḍavas, O Bharata,

153 None could so much
As even look
At Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman –
Except Ghaṭotkaca.
The maha-powerful
Indra-among-rākṣasas

154 O finest-of-the-Bharatas!
His eyes
Rolling in rage,
Biting his lips
And rubbing his palms,
The rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca

155 Angrily
Ordered his charioteer:
"Drive me
To the son of Droṇa!"
Screaming a mahā-roar
Of leonine energy,
The fearfully famed rākṣasa

156 Climbed
Into another chariot
Decorated with victory flags –
A fearsome vehicle –
And re-commenced
His attack on Droṇa's son.

157 The foe-exterminating rākṣasa
Attacked Droṇa's son
With a mahā-malignant
Celestial thunderbolt-weapon
Decorated with eight bells –
Which he hurled
At Aśvatthāman.

158 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Placed his bow
Inside his chariot,
Seized the Aśani-thunderbolt
And flung it back
At the rākṣasa
Who leapt down from his chariot.

159 That mahā-lustrous Aśani
Reduced the horses,
The charioteer
And the chariot
To ashes
And plunged
Into the earth.

160 They saw
The son of Droṇa
Jump out of his chariot
And seize the fearful
Aśani-missile crafted
By Śaṅkara-Śiva himself
And offered him pūjā-praise
For the glorious feat,

161 O king! Riding the chariot
Of Dhṛṣṭadyumna, and stringing
A fearful bow like Indra's weapon
The rainbow,
Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca

162 Fired a volley
Of sharp arrows
At the broad chest
Of Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman.
Unperturbed, Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Fired snake-venomed
Gold-feathered arrows
At the chest
Of Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,

163 Who retaliated
With a volley
Of a thousand *nārāca*-shafts.
With a counter-volley
Of fire-tipped arrows
The two repulsed the attack.

164 O bull-brave Bharata!
The gory mahā-clash between
The two lions-among-men and Aśvatthāman
Astounded and delighted everyone.

165 Bhīma arrived
On the battlefield
With a thousand chariots,
Three hundred elephants,
And six thousand cavalry.

166 At that time
Dharmātmā Aśvatthāman
With undeteriorating prowess
Was battling it alone
With Bhīma's rākṣasa son
And Dhṛṣṭadyumna
With his army
Of loyal warriors.

167 O Bharata!
Droṇa's son performed
Such a wondrous feat
There –
It is not possible
For any other
To perform such a feat.

168 In less time
Than it takes to blink,
With his sharp arrows
He slaughtered
Horses and charioteers
And demolished chariots
And killed elephants –
An entire *akṣauhiṇī*
Of the rākṣasa army.

169 He did this
Before the very eyes
Of Bhīma
Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
The twins Nakula and Sahadeva
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Vijaya-Arjuna
And Acyuta-Krishna
The Imperishable One
The Never-failing One.

170 Grievously wounded
By his *nārāca*-arrows,
Which sped unerringly
To their targets,
Huge elephants
Toppled and fell
Like tall-peaked mountains.

171 Chopped off
Elephant trunks
Writhed and wriggled
On the battlefield,
A splendid spectacle
As if the earth
Was swarming with snakes.

172 Strewn with shredded gold-
Staffs of royal parasols,
The earth looked like the sky
At the end of a yuga
Liberally sprinkled
With suns and moons and planets.

173 Fragmented flagstaffs
the frogs
War-drums
the large tortoises
Umbrellas
the rows of swans
Yaktail fans
the froth and foam

174 *Kaṅka*-herons and vultures
the crocodiles
Various weapons
the fishes
Huge elephants
the boulders
Dead horses
the *makara*-sea-monsters

175 Overturned chariots – the banks
Flags – the beautiful trees
Arrows – the shoals of fearful fish
Lances, spears, swords – the snakes

176 Marrow and flesh
the gross mire –
Headless corpses
the rafts –
Clusters of hair
the weeds –
Instilling terror
in cowards –

177 A gory river
of blood
Of elephants and horses
and warriors
Was created there
by Droṇa's son –

178 A roaring river
of rotting bodies
Flowing steadily
Towards the mahā-
Dreadful ocean
Of Yama's kingdom.

179 Having slaughtered
The rākṣasas,
Aśvatthāman wounded
Hiḍimbā's son
With countless arrows.
Boiling with anger,
He next targeted
Wolf-waisted Bhīma
And Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna

180 And Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons
With his *nārāca*-arrows,
Wounding them;
And went on to kill
Drupada's son Suratha.
Such was the valour
Of mahā-powerful Aśvatthāman

181 He killed on the field
Drupada's other sons as well:
Śatruñjaya and Balānīka
And Jayānīka and Jayāśva.

182 Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman
Despatched rājā Śrutāhvaya
To the abode of Yama.
With three sharp
Lovely-feathered arrows
He killed Hemamālin,

183 Pṛṣaghra and Candrasena.
With ten more arrows
He killed,
O lord of men,
The ten sons
Of Kuntibhoja.

184 Infuriated Aśvatthāman
Selected a splendid
Straight-flying
Fearful arrow,
Fitted it
Into his bow, ear-taut,
And targeted

185 Ghaṭotkaca
With that awesome
Arrow resembling
The rod of Yama
The god of death.

186 O lord of the earth!
*Pṛthivī-pati!*
That exquisite
Feathered arrow
Sped through the heart
Of the rākṣasa
Ghaṭotkaca
And plunged
Into the earth.

187 Seeing Ghaṭotkaca
Topple as if dead,
The mahā-chariot-hero
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Drove his chariot away
From Aśvatthāman.

188 O lord of men!
O Bharata!
All the warriors
Of Yudhiṣṭhira's forces
Retreated.
Droṇa's son
Heroic Aśvatthāman
Roared his victory-cry.
All –
Including your son –
Offered pūjā-praise
To Aśvatthāman.

189 The earth
Was a gruesome spectacle –
Everywhere the corpses
Of night-ranging rākṣasas
Mangled by arrows –
The huge corpses
Like mountains
Littering the landscape.

190 The Siddhas
Gandharvas
Piśācas
The Nāga-serpents
The Suparṇa-birds
The Pitara-spirits
The Rākṣasas
The Bhūta-ghosts
The Apsarās
And the gods
Offered pūjā-praise
To Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SEVEN



1 Seeing Drupada's sons
And Kuntibhoja's sons
Cut down
By Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
(continued Sañjaya)
Along with thousands
Of rākṣasas,

2 Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma,
Drupada's son Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
And Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
Re-planned their strategy
And prepared for battle.

3 Somadatta was infuriated
Seeing Sātyaki
Returning to battle.
O Bharata!
He shrouded Sātyaki
With a shower of arrows.

4 With both armies
Battling for victory
The clash
That took place
Between the warriors
Was most fearful.

5 Protecting
Sātvata-Sātyaki,
Bhima wounded
Somadatta
With ten
Stone-sharpened
Gold-feathered
Arrows.

6 Somadatta retaliated
With a hundred arrows
Targeting brave Bhima.
Grievously mourning
The slaughter of his son
By Sātyaki,

7 Old Somadatta,
Who possessed every guṇa
Like Nahuṣa's son Yāyati,
Was nevertheless wounded
By ten thunderbolt-arrows
Shot by Sātyaki.

8 With tremendous śakti
He afflicted Somadatta
And wounded him further
With seven
More arrows.
To help Sātyaki,
Bhīma hurled
A new and fierce

9 *Parigha*
Iron-spiked-bludgeon
At the head
Of Somadatta.
Selecting a fire-fierce
Incomparable arrow,
Sātvata-Sātyaki

10 Released
That sharp,
Lovely-feathered shaft
At Somadatta's chest.
That terrible
*Parigha*-bludgeon
And the arrow simultaneously

11 Struck the mahā-chariot-hero –
The body of brave Somadatta –
And he fell.
Seeing his son
Swoon,
Bāhlīka attacked

12 With a deluge
Of arrows
Like torrents of rain
In the monsoon.
For the sake
Of Sātvata-Sātyaki,
Bhīma discharged nine arrows
At Bāhlīka,

13 Grievously wounding
The mahā-ātmaned hero.
Plunging his *śakti*-spear
In Bhīma's chest,
The incensed

14 Mahā-muscled warrior
Bāhlīka looked
Like Puraṁdara-Indra
Hurling his thunderbolt.
Struck by the *śakti*,
Bhīma swayed
And fell in a swoon.

15 Quickly recovering,
Bhīma retaliated
By hurling a mace.
The Pāṇḍava's mace
Smashed
The head of Bāhlīka.

16 Like a tree
Struck by lightning,
He tumbled and fell,
Dead.
With the death
Of that bull-brave hero
Bāhlīka,

17 Your ten sons,
Each resembling
Daśaratha's son Rāma,
Attacked Bhīma:
Nāgadatta and Dṛḍharatha
Mahābāhu,
Āyobhuja-Āyobāhu,

18 Dṛḍha-Dṛḍhakṣatra
Suhasta
Virajā
Prumāthin
Ugra-Ugraśravas
Anūyāyin-Agrayāyin.
Seeing them,
Bhīma was infuriated.
Selecting special
Crafted-to-succeed
Ten arrows –

19 One for each –
He targeted
Their vital organs
With unerring aim.
Struck
By those arrows,
Your sons
Toppled from their chariots,
Dead,

20 Like trees
Rolling down
A mountain slope,
Smashed by a storm.
After killing
Your ten sons
With ten arrows,
Bhīma

21 Discharged
A deluge of arrows
At Vṛṣasena,
The dear son of Karṇa.
Karṇa's illustrious brother
Vṛkaratha

22 Atttacked and wounded
Bhīma with *nārāca*-arrows.
O Bharata!
Killing seven
Chariot-heroes
Among your brothers-in-law,

Transcreated by P. Lal

23 Bhīma also
Felled Satacandra
With *nārāca*-arrows.
Unable to endure
The slaughter of
The mahā-chariot-hero
Śatacandra,

24 Śakuni's brave brothers –
Gavākṣa
Sarabha
Vibhu
Subhaga
Bhānudatta –
These five mahā-chariot-heroes

25 Swooped upon Bhīma
And wounded him
With sharp arrows.
Struck by those *nārāca*-arrows
Like a mountain
By a torrential downpour,

26 Bhīma nonetheless
Killed all the five
Chariot-heroes
With retaliatory shafts.
Seeing the five die,
The excellent brave kings
Wavered.

27 That was when
Incensed Yudhiṣṭhira,
O defectless one,
Began his slaughter
Of your ranks
Before the very eyes
Of jar-born Droṇa
And your sons.

28 Incensed Yudhiṣṭhira
Despatched to Death's realm
The Ambaṣṭhas and Mālavas
The valiant Trigartas
And the Śibis.

29 The earth
Became a filthy muddle
Of mire and blood
When rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
Began his slaughter
Of the Abhīṣāhas,
Śurasenas and Bāhlīkas
And Vasātis.

30 O rājā!
Yudhiṣṭhira's arrows
Despatched
The Yaudheyas and Mālavas
And the Madraka hosts
To the realm of Death.

31 Around Yudhiṣṭhira's chariot
Rose shouts:
"Kill!"
"Capture him!"
"Wound him!"
"Chop him to pieces!"

32 Seeing Yudhiṣṭhira
Wreaking havoc
In your ranks,
Droṇa, urged
By your son Duryodhana,
Rained a barrage of arrows
On Yudhiṣṭhira.

33 In exceeding anger,
Droṇa fired
The Vāyavya-wind-mussile
At Pṛthā-Kuntī's son
Yudhiṣṭhira
Who neutralised it
With a celestial missile
Of his own.

34 His weapon incapaciatated,
Droṇa fired five more:
The Vāruṇa, the Yāmya,
The Āgneya, the Tvāṣṭr,
And the Sāvitra,

35 For in his towering rage
He was determined
To kill Pāṇḍu's son.
In no way perturbed
By the multiplicity
Of celestial missiles,
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira,

36 The mahā-muscled hero,
With his own
Celestial counter-missiles,
Neutralised the missiles
Hurled or about to be hurled
By jar-born Droṇa.
Eager to keep
The truth of his vow,
Jar-born Droṇa,

37 To kill Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira,
O Bharata,
Fired the Aindra-missile
And the Prājapatya-missile.

38 The lord of the Kuru dynasty
Lording-with-the-gait-of-an-elephant
Striding-with-the-gait-of-a-lion
Broad-chested
Large-and-pink-eyed
Incredibly energetic
Yudhiṣṭhira
Invoked the Māhendra-missile
Which baffled Droṇa's missiles.

39 Enraged
Seeing all his missiles
Negated
Droṇa decided
To kill Yudhiṣṭhira
With the ultimate Brāhma-missile.

40 Lord of the earth!
An all-shrouding darkness
Made everything invisible.
Terror gripped
All on the battlefield.

41 O Indra among rājās!
Seeing the Brāhma-missile
Poised to launch,
Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Neutralised it
With a counter Brāhma-missile.

42 All the leading warriors
Shouted praise
For the two bull-brave heroes
Droṇa and Yudhiṣṭhira
Both brilliant bowmen
Both well-versed in war-weapons.

43 O Bharata!
Leaving
His confrontation
With Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira,
Droṇa, his eyes
Copper-red with rage,
Began massacring Drupada's ranks
With his Vāyavya-missile.

44 Decimated by Droṇa,
The Pāñcālas
Fled in fear
Even as Bhīma
And the mahā-ātmaned son
Of Pṛthā-Kuntī, Arjuna,
Watched.

45 Diadem-decked Kirīṭin Arjuna
And Bhīma
Re-grouped their armies
With a massive manoeuvre
Of their chariot-divisions
And prepared to attack.

46 Heinous-deed-doing
Bībhatsu-Arjuna
Attacked the right flank
And wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma
The left flank
Of Bhāradvaja-Droṇa's army
With a deluge of arrows.

47 They were followed,
O mahārāja,
With supporting volleys
From the Kekayas
The Sṛñjayas
The mahā-energetic Pāñcālas
The Matsyas
And the Sātvatas.

48 Reeling
Under the assaults
Of diadem-decked Arjuna,
The army of the Bharatas,
Darkness-deluded
And lacking sleep,
Scattered and fled.

49 Mahārāja!
However hard they tried,
Your son Duryodhana
And Droṇa were unable
To prevent the panic.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-EIGHT

1 Duryodhana saw
The vast army
Of the Pāṇḍavas
Advancing
(continued Sañjaya)
Irresistibly,
And he said to Karṇa:

2 "Dear friend
Who helps friends!
The time is now!
Save all my warriors
And mahā-chariot-heroes,
Karṇa!

3 They are trapped by the enraged
Pāñcālas, Matsyas and Kekayas,
And the mahā-chariot-hero Pāṇḍavas
Breathing heavy sighs
Like snakes.

4 They are roaring
With joy,
They know victory
Is in sight –
The Pāṇḍavas
And their allies
The Pāñcālas
Who equal Śakra-Indra
In prowess and valour."

5 Karṇa replied:
"Even if Puraṁdara-Indra
Comes to save
Pārtha-Arjuna now,
I will defeat him
And kill the Pāṇḍava.

6 In all truth,
I promise this, O Bharata!
Trust me.
I will destroy Pāṇḍu's sons
And all the Pāñcālas.

7 Like Agni's son
Pāvaki-Kārtikeya
Who placed victory
In the hards
Of Vāsava-Indra
By killing Tāraka,
I will fight for you
For you are dear to me.
O earth-lord! I live to serve you.

8 Phālguna-Arjuna
Is the most powerful
Of Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons.
I will fire the invincible
*Śakti*-missile of Indra
At him.

9 With the brilliant bowman dead,
His brothers, O bestower of honour,
Will either
Come under your control
Or go again into forest-exile.

10 O scion of the Kurus!
Why should you despair
So long as I am alive?
I will fight
The Pāṇḍavas today
And defeat them.

11 With my arrows
I will slice
The Pāñcālas
The Kekayas
And the Vṛṣṇis
In tiny pieces,
And place the entire earth
In your hands."

12 When Karṇa finished
(continued Sañjaya),
Mahā-muscled Saradvat-Kṛpa
Smiled,
And said
To the charioteer's son:

13 "Splendid! Splendid!
Karṇa,
Son of Rādhā,
If words alone
Led to success!
But we have seen
No great feat of yours,
Nor any fruits
Of any such feat.

14
In front of
The Kaurava Duryodhana,
You talk big.
If words were all,
Bull-brave Duryodhana
Will certainly
Become the lord.

15
Son of a charioteer!
You have fought the Pāṇḍavas
Often enough, yet each time
They have beaten you.

16
Remember the time
When Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son Duryodhana
Was taken captive
By the Gandharvas?
You fled,
Though the rest of the army
Kept fighting.

17
Remember the time
In the capital of Virāṭa
When you, Karṇa,
And your brothers
And all the Kauravas
Were routed
By Pārtha-Arjuna?

18
You cannot face singly
Phālguna-Arjuna in battle.
What makes you think
You can defeat
All the Pāṇḍavas,
With Krishna helping them?

19
Karṇa!
Son of a charioteer!
You talk too much.
Fight! Don't talk.
True heroes don't talk;
They do things.

20 Karṇa!
Son of a charioteer!
You rumble like
A rainless autumn cloud.
It's all so fruitless.
Rājā Duryodhana
Doesn't see this.

21 Keep roaring,
Son of Rādhā,
So long as you don't see
Pārtha-Arjuna.
When he comes near you,
Your roars
Will cease.

22 Keep roaring
So long as you are
Out of arrow-shot
Of Phālguna-Arjuna.
When the arrows
Of Pārtha-Arjuna
Pierce you,
You roars will cease.

23 Physical might
Is the strength of a Kṣatriya.
Words are the strength
Of a Brahmin.
The bow is the strength
Of Phālguna-Arjuna.
Airyā hopes are the strength
Of Karṇa.

24 Who can defeat Pārtha-Arjuna,
The delight of Rudra-Śiva?"
These words
Of Śāradvat-Kṛpa

25 So agitated
Foe-crushing Karṇa
That he retorted
To Kṛpa:
"Heroes always
Roar like clouds
In the monsoon.

26 Like seeds well sown,
Their shouts fructify
When the tone is ripe.
I do not see what's wrong
With warriors under stress
Praising themselves
On the battlefield.

27 A man
Who makes up his mind
To do something impressive,
A man who proclains
He has resolved
To achieve greatness –

28 Such a man
Will find fate
Coming to his aid.
If I have decided
On this great task

29 Of killing Pāṇḍu's sons –
And Krishna –
And the Sātvata-Sātyaki –
Why are *you*, O Brahmin,
So upset?
How is it harming you?
Why is my roaring and boasting
Hurting you?

30 The brave don't roar
Like rainless
Autumn clouds.
They are like pāṇḍits.
They are intelligent.
They know what they can do.
And so they roar.

31 I have made up my mind
That I will today
On the battlefield
Do whatever I can
To kill the Pāṇḍavas
And Krishna.
I am confident.
And so I roar,
O Gautama-Kṛpa.

32 You will see the fruits
Of my roaring, O Brahmin.
I will kill
The Pāṇḍavas and Krishna
And the Sātvata-Sātyaki,

33 And having removed these thorns,
I will hand over the earth
To Duryodhana."
Kṛpa replied:
"I have no faith
In your delirious declarations.

34 You speak meanly, Karṇa,
Of Krishna and Arjuna
And Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira,
But victory belongs
To the side supported
By war-expert Krishna
And Arjuna.

35 The gods
Gandharvas
Yakṣas
Mortals
*Uraga*-serpents
Rākṣasas –
Clad in full armour –
If they all
Turned up
On the battlefield,
They would still not be able
To defeat
Krishna and Arjuna.

36 Devoted-to-Brahmins
Speaker-of-truth
Self-controlled
Giver-of-pūjā-praise-
To-gurus-and-gods
Always-dharma-observing
Well-versed-in-war-weapons

37 Patient-and-grateful –
Such a one is
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira.
His brother are powerful
Skilled-in-arms
Persevering-in-hard-work

38 Devoted-to-gurus-and-elders
Intelligent
Dedicated-to-dharma
Renowned.
His valiant-as-Indra relatives
Are magnificent warriors
And deeply admire him.

39 Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Śikhaṇḍin
Durmukha's son Janamejaya
Candrasena
Rudrasena
Kīrtidharman
Dhruva
Dhara

40 Vasucandra
Dāmacandra
Siṁhacandra
Sutejana
Drupada's sons
And mahā-weapons-expert
Drupada himself

41 The Matsya-rājā and his sons
Are vigorously supporting him,
As well as
Śatānīka and Sūryadatta
Śrutānīka and Śrutadhvaja

42 Balānīka
Jayānīka
Jayāśva
Rathavāhana
Candrodaya
Samaratha
Virāṭa and his brothers

43 The twins Nakula and Sahadeva
Draupadī's sons
The rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca.
Whoever is supported
By all these heroes
Can never lose.

44 Apart from these
Pāṇḍu's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Has other advantages and guṇas.
The entire universe
With its gods
Anti-gods
Humans

45 Yakṣas
Rākṣasa
*Bhūta*-spirits
*Bhujaga*-serpent-demons
Elephants
Can be annihilated
By Bhīma and Phālguna-Arjuna
If they so desire.

46 And Yudhiṣṭhira singly
With a wrathful look
Can reduce the world
To ashes.
For whose sake incomparable
Śauri-Krishna is ready
To don armour and fight –

47 How can you ever hope,
Karṇa, to defeat them?
Son of a charioteer!
It is sheer insolence for you
To challenge Śauri-Krishna –

48 You are always ready
With this mahā-insult."
Rādhā's son Karṇa
Heard this,
O bull-brave Bharata,
And laughed
(continued Sañjaya).

49 To his guru
Śāradvat-Kṛpa,
Karṇa said:
"Brahmin!
You are right
About the Pāṇḍavas.

50 The sons of Pāṇḍu
Are indeed gifted
With these and other guṇas.
Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons
Cannot be defeated
By the gods
Led by Vāsava-Indra,

51 By Daityas
Yakṣas
Gandharvas
Piśācas
*Uragas*
And rākṣasas.
But I possess
The Śakti-missile
Gifted to me
By Vāsava-Indra,
And with it
I will defeat
Pārtha-Arjuna.

52 O twice-born one!
Śakra-Indra himself
Gave me this
Infallible Śakti-missile.
With it
I will kill
Savyasācī-Arjuna.

Transcreated by P. Lal

53 With Pāṇḍava Arjuna dead,
Krishna
And his same-blood brothers –
Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma –
Will lose all desire
To rule and enjoy the earth.

54 Gautama-Kṛpa!
With all of them
Disposed off and dead,
The entire sea-girt earth
Will safely and smoothly
Pass into the hands
Of the Indra-of-the-Kurus
Duryodhana.

55 Gautama-Kṛpa!
Behind every success
In this world is
A well-thought-out plan.
There's a good reason
For my roaring.

56 You are a Brahmin,
You are old,
Not very fit to fight.
You have soft feelings
For the sons
Of Pṛthā-Kuntī.
You are confused.
That's why you say
Such hurtful words to me.

57 Wicked Brahmin!
If you speak
One more ugly word,
I'll swing my sword
And cut off your tongue!

58 Wicked one!
Since you are so keen
To praise the Pāṇḍavas
And spread fear
In the ranks
Of the Kauravas,

59 Then listen
To what I have to say,
O Brahmin.
Duryodhana
Droṇa
Śakuni
Durmukha
Jaya

60 Duḥśāsana
Vṛṣasena
The Madra-rājā Śalya
And you
Somadatta
Bhūri
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Viviṁśati –

61 When they don armour and fight,
Who can defeat them?
Can any man defeat them,
Even if he is as strong as Śakra-Indra?

62 These warriors
Versed in war-weapons
Brimming-with-strength
Desirous-of-heaven
Learned-in-dharma
Brilliant-in-battle
Can rout and kill
Even the gods.

63 They will stand firm
In full armour
On the battlefield
To kill the Pāṇḍavas
And bring victory
To the Kaurava king.

64 It is my belief
That even the strongest
Win because of fate.
How else can you explain
Mahā-powerful Bhīṣma
Supine now on his arrow-bed?

65 Vikarṇa
Citrasena
Bāhlīka
Jayadratha
Bhūriśravas
Jaya
Jalasaṁdha
Sudakṣiṇa

66 Finest of chariot-heroes Śala
Brave Bhagadatta –
These and other rajas
Could not be defeated
Even by the gods,
Such was their valour.

67 Yet the Pāṇḍavas
Cut down these heroes
On the battlefield.
O Puruṣādhama! Worst of men!
How could this happen
Without the hand of fate?

68 Twice-born one!
As for the enemies
Of Duryodhana –
Enemies whose praises
You are forever singing –
Haven't they lost
Hundreds of thousands
Of heroes too?

69 The soldiers of the Pāṇḍavas
And the soldiers of the Kauravas
Are both getting butchered
And decimated every day.
I don't see the Pāṇḍavas
Doing anything
All that great and glorious.

70 Basest of Brahmins!
Today I will battle for Duryodhana
With all my strength the Pāṇḍavas
Who you think so powerful.
Fate will decide who wins."

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-NINE

1 Seeing his maternal uncle Kṛpa
(continued Sañjaya)
Insulted by the charioteer's son,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Unsheahed his sword
And rushed at Karṇa.

2 Droṇa's enraged son,
In the very sight
Of the Kaurava rājā Duryodhana,
Pounced on Karṇa
Like a lion
Leaping at a musth elephant.

3 "Ill-minded wretch! Vilest of men!
My maternal uncle
Is a brilliant bowman
Who has rightly praised Arjuna.
Because you are envious
And arrogant,"
continued Aśvatthāman,

4 "You refuse to accept
The words of this bowman
Whom all the worlds respect
And boast instead
Of your own prowess.

5 Where was this prowess
And where were your weapons
When Arjuna
The wielder of the Gāṇḍīva
Cut down Jayadratha
On the battlefield
In front of your eyes?

6 Vilest of charioteers!
It's just a dream you have
To defeat one who fought
Mahādeva-Śiva himself.

7 Whom the gods and anti-gods
Led by Indra cannot defeat,
That all weapons-versed-warrior
Who has Krishna to help him –

8 How can you,
O utterly low-minded
Son of a charioteer,
Even think of defeating
The invincible Arjuna,
The one and only hero
In the three worlds,
Even with the help
Of all these earth-lords?

9 Crooked-minded
Son of a charioteer!
Karṇa! Look at me!
Stay where you are!
Vilest of men!
I'll behead you!"

10 O rājā! (Sañjaya continued)
Mahā-energetic Rājā Duryodhana
And finest-among-men Kṛpa
Restrained
Over-wrought Aśvatthāman.

11 Karṇa said:
"O finest Kaurava!
Let him be.
This wicked wretch,
This base Brahmin
Boasts too much
Of his brilliance in battle.
Let him face me."

12 Aśvatthāman said:
"Crooked-thinking - excellingly so –
Son of a charioteer!
We forgive you.
Phālguna-Arjuna
Will prick
Your bloated pride."

13 Duryodhana said:
“Honour-bestowing Aśvatthāman.
Be calm.
Do not lose your temper with
The charioteers's son.

14 O finest of the twice-born!
Be happy
That you
Karṇa
Kṛpa
Droṇa
The Madra-rājā Śalya
And Subala's son Śakuni
Have a grand mission
To accomplish.

15 O Brahmin!
Look at the Pāṇḍavas
Advancing towards us,
Challenging
Rādhā's son Karṇa.”

16 Pacified by the rājā
(continued Sañjaya),
Droṇa's mahā-minded son
Aśvatthāman, O mahārāja,
Regained his composure.

17 O Indra-among-rājās!
Because he was gentle
By nature, Kṛpa,
The mahā-minded ācārya,
Restrained himself
And said:

18 “O excellingly wicked-minded
Son of a charioteer!
We forgive you.
Phalguna-Arjuna
Will prick
Your bloated pride.”

Transcreated by P. Lal

19 O rājā!
(continued Sañjaya)
The Pāṇḍavas
And the illustrious
Pāñcālas
Joined ranks
And advanced towards Karṇa
Shouting their war-cries
On the battlefield.

20 Finest of charioteers,
Brave and energetic
Karṇa readied his bow
And, like Śakra-Indra
Surrounded by the gods,
He, encircled by the Kauravas,

21 Prepared for battle,
Relying on the strength
Of his wondrous valour.
A calamitous clash
Took place between
Karṇa and the Pāṇḍavas.

22 Mahārāja! Leonine war-cries
Reverberated on the field.
O rājā! The Pāṇḍavas
And the illustrious Pāñcālas,

23 Spotting mahā-muscled Karṇa,
Started shouting:
"Here is Karṇa! Where is Karṇa!
Karṇa, stay on the field!

24 Base scoundrel!
Vilest of men!
Come!
Fight us!"
Others said,
Eyes aflame with anger
When they spotted Karṇa:

25 “This son of a charioteer,
This man of insipid intelligence –
Let him perish
At the hands
Of these earth-lords.
He does not deserve
To live.

26 This ill-deed-doer
Hates the Pāṇḍavas
And wishes them harm.
He’s a tool of Duryodhana
And the root
Of all this mischief.

27 Kill him!”
Saying this,
The mahā-chariot-hero
Kṣatriya warriors fired
Volleys of obscuring arrows

28 To kill
The charioteer’s son Karṇa.
They were encouraged
By Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira.
The sight of all those
Mahā-chariot-heroes attacking

29 Neither frightened
Nor pained
The charioteer’s son Karṇa.
Seeing that massive
Wondrous doomsday army,

30 Valiant, dexterous,
Mahā-powerful, invincible Karṇa,
Eager to please your sons,
With a huge barrage of arrows

31 Checked the advance
Of the army
On all sides,
O bull-brave Bharata.
The sons of Pṛthā-Kuntī also,
Discharging volleys of arrows,

32 Blocked Karṇa's offensive,
Shaking hundreds and thousands
Of bows, battling
With Rādhā's son Karṇa
Like the Daityas
Battling with Śakra-Indra.

33 *Prabhu*! Lord!
With a deluge of arrows
Karṇa repulsed the shafts
Of the earth-lords.

34 A bloody battle followed,
Attack repulsed by counter-attack,
Like the gods-against-anti-gods battle
Between Śakra-Indra and the Dānavas.

35 What wonderful dexterity
Was displayed
By the charioteer's son!
However hard they tried,
His enemies were unable
To contain him.

36 The mahā-chariot-hero
Karṇa
Repulsed all arrow-showers
And targeted the yokes
Umbrellas
War-flags
Axles
And horses
Of his enemies

37 With fierce arrows
On which his name was engraved.
Oppressed by Karṇa,
The rājās,
Perplexed and undecided,

38 Scuttled here and there
Aimlessly
Like cattle
In the chill of winter
Countless horses
Elephants
And chariot-heroes

39 Afflicted
By Karṇa's arrows
Staggered
On the battlefield.
O rājā!
Chopped heads
And sliced arms

40 Of unretreating warriors
Lay scattered
On the earth.
Some dead,
Some dying,
Some mutilated,

41 The field of battle
Looked like the realm
Of Vaivasvata-Yama
The god of death.
O rājā!
Witnessing the feats
Of Karṇa, Duryodhana

42 Went to Aśvatthāman
And said:
"Karṇa in full armour
Is battling
All the earth-lords.

43 Afflicted
By the arrows
Of Karna,
See them scatter –
Like hordes
Of anti-gods
Fleeing from the assault
Of Kārtikeya.

Transcreated by P. Lal

44 Seeing his ranks
Routed by intelligent Karṇa,
Heinous-deed-doer
Bībhatsu-Arjuna
Is advancing to kill
The charioteer's son.

45 Take what steps you must
To see that
The mahā-chariot-hero
Karṇa
Is not killed
By the Pāṇḍava
Before our very eyes."

46 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Kṛpa
Śalya
And the mahā-chariot-hero
Hārdikya-Kṛtavarman
Rushed towards Pārtha-Arjuna
To protect the charioteer's son,

47 Because Kuntī's son
Arjuna was rushing
Upon them
Like Śakra-Indra
Attacking the Daitya hordes.
O Indra-among-rājās!
Heinous-deed-doer
Bībhatsu-Arjuna,
Supported by the Pāñcālas,

48 Was pouncing at Karṇa
Like Śatakratu-Indra
At Vṛtra.
"Seeing Phālguna-Arjuna
Angrily rushing
To attack,"
said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"Like Kāla
The Spirit-of-Cosmic-Time
Like Antaka the Spirit-of-Doom
Like Yama the god of death

49 What did Karṇa –
Vaikartana-Karṇa –
Do to stop him?
The mahā-chariot-hero
Karṇa
Was always taunting
Pārtha-Arjuna

50 And thought
He was awesome enough
To defeat
Heinous-deed-doer
Bībhatsu-Arjuna.
Suddenly confronted
With his inveterate enemy,

51 What did Karṇa –
Vaikartana-Karṇa –
Do to stop him?"
Seeing Pāṇḍava Arjuna advance
(replied Sañjaya) like one
Rival elephant against another,

52 Karṇa
Without the least hesitation
In no way perturbed
Attacked Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
Vaikartana-Karṇa
Who had attacked
So furiously

53 Was shrouded
By Pārtha-Arjuna
With straight-speeding arrows,
And Karṇa retaliated
Similarly.
With an arrow-net.
Pāṇḍava Arjuna
Shrouded Karna,

54 And enraged Karṇa
Wounded Arjuna with three arrows.
Mahā-powerful Pārtha-Arjuna
Was unable to tolerate
This skilful bowmanship.

55 Foe-tormenting
Arjuna
Discharged three hundred
Stone-sharpened
Straight-speeding
Arrows
At the charioteer's son.

56 Smiling as he did so,
Valiant and powerful
Arjuna angrily
Wounded Karṇa's left arm
With a *nārāca*-arrow.

57 The bow
Fell
From Karṇa's injured arm.
In half the time
That it takes to blink,
The mahā-powerful hero
Karṇa
Picked up another bow

58 And overwhelmed
Phālguna-Arjuna
With a shower of arrows.
Arjuna retaliated,
O Bharata,
By neutralising that shower
Of the charioteer's son

59 With a counter-shower.
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Smiled as he did so.
Bent on mutual violence
With arrow-showers,
The two earth-lords

60 Continued
To rain
Arrows at each other.
A mahā-clash
A wondrous encounter
Took place between
Karṇa and the Pāṇḍava,

61 Like that
Between two wild elephants
Fighting to possess
A she-elephant in her season.
Observing the prowess
Of Karṇa,
The brilliant bowman
Pārtha-Arjuna

62 Sliced that part
Of Karṇa's bow
Where he was grasping it.
With four *bhalla*-arrows
He despatched
All four horses of Karṇa
To the realm of Yama.

63 Foe-tormenting Arjuna
Decapitated Karṇa's charioteer.
Bow sliced,
Four horses
And charioteer killed,

64 Pāṇḍu's son
Pārtha-Arjuna
Targeted Karṇa next
With four arrows.
Bull-brave Karna
Quickly leapt
From his horseless chariot

65 And, harassed by
Arjuna's arrows,
Climbed for safety
Into Kṛpa's chariot.
Pierced by the arrows
Of Arjuna, Karṇa
Looked like a quiver
Full of arrows.

66 To save his life
He leapt into Kṛpa's chariot.
O bull-brave Bharata!
Seeing Rādhā's son Karṇa
Worsted,

67 Mangled by the arrows
Of Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
Your allies' warriors
Fled
In all the ten directions.
O king!
Seeing them scatter,
Rājā Duryodhana

68 Rallied them
With these words:
"Bull-brave Kṣatriyas!
Stand firm!
There is no cause to panic!

69 I will myself
Go to battle
To kill Pārtha-Arjuna!
I will kill
All the sons of Pṛthā-Kuntī
And the Pāñcālas
And Somakas.

70 Today I will fight
The wielder of the Gāṇḍīva
And today
The sons of Pṛthā-Kuntī
Will see me as Kala
The Spirit-of-Cosmic-Time
At the end of a yuga.

71 Today they will see
My arrows
In thousands upon thousands
Shrouding
The battlefield
Like swarms of locusts.

72 Today
All the warriors
On the battlefield
Will see
The deluge of my arrows
Like monsoon clouds
Pouring rain.

73 Today
With knotted
And straight-speeding arrows
I will defeat
Pārtha-Arjuna.
Brave ones!
Stand firm on the field!
Shake off your fear
Of Phālguna-Arjuna!

74 Like the *makara*-monster-
Teeming ocean
Tamed by its shores,
Phālguna-Arjuna
Will not be able
To withstand my prowess."

75 With these words,
Rājā Duryodhana,
Eyes red with rage,
Heading a huge army,
Marched against Phālguna-Arjuna.

76 Seeing mahā-muscled
Duryodhana advancing,
Śaradvat's son Kṛpa
Went to Aśvatthāman
And said:

77 "This mahā-muscled rājā,
Blinded by anger,
Has lost his senses.
Like insects into fire,
He is leading his army
Against Phālguna-Arjuna.

78 Stop this Kaurava!
Stop him now!
Stop him
Before he sacrifices
His life
To Pārtha-Arjuna
Before our very eyes,
Thinking himself to be
A lion-among-men.

79 Stop him now!
Stop this foolhardy
Heroic Kaurava,
This earth-lord,
Before he is trapped
In the arrows
Of Phālguna-Arjuna.

80 Stop the rājā now!
Stop him
Before the arrows
Of Pārtha-Arjuna
Reduce him to ashes –
Arrows that are as fierce
As sloughed-off snakes.

81 O honour-bestower!
I think it is wrong
That rājā Duryodhana
Marches against Pārtha-Arjuna
With no one helping him
So long as we are alive.

82 What chance
Has a lion
Against an elephant?
It is very difficult
For our Kaurava ruler
To prevail against
Diadem-decked Arjuna."

83 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Listened to the advice
Of his maternal uncle;
Weapons-expert Aśvatthāman
Went to Duryodhana
And said:

84 "Kaurava scion!
Son of Gāndhārī!
So long as I breathe,
I will not let you go.
Do not refuse me, O Kaurava.
I mean no disrespect.
I am your well-wisher.

85 Do not worry
About vanquishing
Pārtha-Arjuna.
I will see to that.
Suyodhana-Duryodhana,
You will stay where you are."

86 Duryodhana replied:
"O finest of the twice-born!
Our ācārya treats
The Pāṇḍavas as if
They were his own children.
And you also are always
Taking their side.

87 It's my bad luck
That your war-prowess
Is getting diminished.
Is this happening
Because you wish to please
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira or Draupadī?
I do not know.

88 Shame on selfish me!
All my invincible
Relatives and friends
Who wish my welfare
Have to suffer like this
For my sake!

89 O son of Gautamī!
Which hero like you,
Well-versed-in-war-weapons,
The equal of Maheśvara-Śiva
Himself in prowess,
Capable of conquering enemies,
Will nevertheless
Refuse to harm them?

90 Aśvatthāman!
Be happy and proud!
Destroy my enemies!
Even the gods and Dānavas
Cannot repulse the śakti
Of your weapons.

91 Son of Droṇa!
Wipe out the Pāñcālas!
Wipe out the Somakas!
Wipe out their allies!
With you helping us,
We will wipe out the rest.

92 Brahmin!
Look at the Somakas, enraged,
And the famed Pāñcālas
Sweeping through my ranks
Like a forest fire!

93 O finest of men!
O mahā-muscled one!
Stop them and the Kekayas
Before they destroy us
With the help of diadem-decked Arjuna.

94 Respected foe-tormenting friend!
Do this speedily.
Now or later,
You must do this.

95 Mahā-muscled one!
You were born
To destroy the Pāñcālas.
Now is the time –
Rid the earth
Of all the Pāñcālas!

96 O lion-among-men!
All the Siddhas
Who attained perfection
Predicted
That you would do this.
Make it happen then!
Destroy the Pāñcālas
And all their followers.

97 I tell you this truly –
The Pāṇḍava and the Somakas
With their combined strength,
No matter how hard they try,
Will not be able
To match your might.

98 Forget
The sons
Of Pṛthā-Kuntī.
Forget
The fact
That they
Are allied
To the Pāñcālas.
Even the gods
Led by Vāsava-Indra
Are no match
For the śakti
Of your weapons.

99 Go! Go!
Mahā-muscled one!
No more delay.
Let us not waste time.
Afflicted by Pārtha-Arjuna,
Your ranks are beginning
To weaken and flee.

100 O honour-bestowing
Mahā-muscled hero!
You have the śakti,
You have the divine energy and prowess
Singly
To humble the sons of Pāṇḍu
And the Pāñcālas."

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY

1 Duryodhana finished
(continued Sañjaya),
And difficult-to-defeat-in-battle
Aśvatthāman
Droṇa's son planned the slaughter of his foes,
Like Indra killing the Daityas.

2 Mahā-muscled
Aśvatthāman replied
To your son:
"O mahā-muscled Kaurava!
All that you have said
Is true.

3 I love the sons of Pāṇḍu.
So does my father.
They love us too.
But war is a different matter,
O enhancer of Kaurava glory!

4 *Tāta*! Dear one!
We risk our lives in battle,
We do the best we can.
I, Karṇa, Śalya,
Kṛpa, Hārdikya-Kṛtavarman
Can wipe out the Pāṇḍavas,
O incomparable king!

5 O Kaurava-glory enhancer!
We can wipe them out
In the blink of an eye.
They also, O mahā-muscled one,
Can wipe out the Kauravas
In a *nimeṣa*-instant.

6 The Pāṇḍavas are battling brilliantly,
And so are we.
The way things are, O Bharata,
Their energy defuses our energy,
Our energy cancels theirs.

7 We cannot defeat the Pāṇḍava army
By brutal force,
Certainly not as long
As the Pāṇḍavas are alive.
What I am telling you
Is the plain truth.

8 O Bharata!
The Pāṇḍavas are powerful
And completely dedicated
To their cause.
What can prevent them
From destroying your army?

9 O Kaurava rājā!
You are greedy
Deceitful
Distrustful
Haughty.
You suspect even us.

10 Rājā! I think
You are mean,
Ill-ātmaned, inhuman.
Naturally you suspect others.

11 Yet, O Kuru scion,
I am staking my life
And going to battle
For your sake.

12 I will fight and kill
The very finest
Of their warriors.
I will fight
The Pāñcālas
The Somakas
The Kekayas

13 And the Pāṇḍavas
For your sake,
O foe-tormentor.
Scorched by my arrows,
The Pāñcālas
And the Somakas
Today

14 Will run
For their lives
Like cows terrorised
By a lion.
When Dharma's son rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
Sees my prowess

15 He and the Somakas
Will think the whole world
Is full of Aśvatthāman
And no one else.
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Will be mortified

16 When he sees me
Wipe out
The Pāñcālas
And the Somakas.
O Bharata!
I will eliminate all
Who confront me
On the battlefield.

17 None shall escape
The might of my arms,
O valiant one."
Mahā-muscled Aśvatthāman
Said this
To your son Duryodhana;

18 Then the terroriser
Of all bowmen
Prepared for battle
Aśvatthāman,
Finest of all who breathe,
Was dedicated to the welfare
Of your son.

19 Gautamī's son Aśvatthāman
Declared before
The Pāñcālas
And the Kekayas:
"Mahā-chariot-heroes!
Batter my body
As hard as you can

20 With your war-weapons.
Serenely and bravely
Show your skill!"
They listened,
And launched
A downpour of weapons

21 On Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman,
Like clouds releasing
A torrential deluge,
O maharaja.
Neutralising those arrows,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
Targeted ten heroes

22 And killed them,
O *prabhu*-lord,
In front of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
And Pāṇḍu's sons.
Battered in battle,
The Pāñcālas and Somakas

23 Fled from
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
And scattered in all directions.
Seeing the valiant
Pāñcālas and Somakas
Fleeing in panic,

24 O mahārāja,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Launched an attack
On Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman.
Flanked by a hundred brave
And unretreating chariot-heroes,

25 In gold-decorated chariots
Rumbling
Like rain-heavy clouds,
The mahā-chariot-hero
Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Son of the Pāñcāla-rājā,

26 Seeing
The systematic slaughter
Of his warriors
On the battlefield,
Turned to Aśvatthāman,
The son of Droṇa,
And addressed him
With these words:

27 "Crooked-minded son of our ācārya!
Why are you involved
In this carnage
Of killing common soldiers?
If you are a real hero,
Come, fight me!
Come!
Stand in front of me!
See how I kill you."

28 O bull-brave Bharata!
Illustrious Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Wounded
The ācārya's son
With sharp arrows
Piercing his vital organs.

29 Thick swarms of
Gold-feathered keen-pointed shafts
Swift-speeding flesh-piercing shafts
Slid
Inside Aśvatthāman's body

30 Like black bees
Thirsting for honey
Entering a flowering tree.
As wrathful as a snake
Crushed underfoot

31 Was the proud
Son of Droṇa
When wounded by
Dhṛṣṭadyumna's arrows.
He said:
"Dhṛṣṭadyumna !
Still still
Just a little while

32 And see my sharp arrows
Speed you
To the realm of Yama
The god of death!"
Saying this
To Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman

33 With brilliant dexterity
Obscured Dhṛṣṭadyumna
With a shower of arrows.
Shrouded by the arrows
Of Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
On the field of battle,
The difficult-to-defeat

34 Son of the Pāñcāla king –
Dhṛṣṭadyumna –
Roared these words
At Droṇa's son :
"Brahmin!
You do not know
How I was born –
Nor my vow.

35 Crooked-minded one!
First I will kill Droṇa,
Then I kill you.
Droṇa is alive,
So I spare you for now.

36 Crooked-minded one!
Before tonight ends
And dawn begins,
I will despatch
Your father and you

37 To the *preta-loka*
Realm of departed spirits.
This I have decided.
Your hate for the sons
Of Pṛthā-Kuntī,
Your bhakti
For the Kauravas –

38 Steady yourself,
And show what you can
Of both today.
You will not escape alive
From me today!
The twice-born one
Who gives up being Brahmin
And delights in Kṣatriya-dharma –

39 Is the basest of men,
And deserves to die
At the hands of all
In this world."
Insulted in this manner
By Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
The finest-of-twice-born-Brahmins
Aśvatthāman

40 Became infuriated
And shouted:
"Wait!
Stay where you are!"
He glared at Pārṣata-
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
With flaming eyes.

41 Heaving snake-sighs,
He deluged his foe with shafts.
Shrouded by the shafts
Of Droṇa's son
On the battlefield,

42 Mahā-muscled Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Who was protected
By all the Pāñcāla warriors,
Was not unnerved,
Being a mahā-chariot-hero,
O finest of rājās.

43 He retaliated
With a variety of arrows
Targeting Aśvatthāman.
Playing with their lives
On the battlefield
The two warriors

44 Who could not tolerate
Each other
Continued to afflict each other
With arrowy showers.

45 The Siddhas, Cāraṇas and other sky-rangers
Offered pūjā-praise
To the fearful gory battlers
Droṇa's son and Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna,

46 Filling the sky
And the ten directions
With their arrow-showers,
They created a mahā-gloom
In which neither
Could see each other.

47 Drawing their bow-strings
In maṇḍala-circles,
They seemed to dance
On the battlefield.
Each bent
On killing the other,
They terrified all
Who watched them.

48 Offered pūjā-praise
Thousands of times
By the heroic spectators,
The two mahā-muscled heroes
Fought dexterously,
Elegantly, exquisitely.

49 Witnessing the two
Locked in combat
Like two wild elephants
In a forest,
The warriors
Of both the armies
Thrilled in delight.

50 The warriors burst
Into leonine war-cries
And blew their conches.
Hundreds of thousands
Of musical instruments
Were sounded
On the battlefield.

51 For a brief period
That horrendous combat
That spread terror
In the hearts of cowards
Seemed perfectly poised
Between two equally matched heroes.

52 Then, O mahārāja,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Destroyed the war-flag,
The bow, the umbrella,
The fore-axle charioteers
Of mahā-ātmaned
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna

53 As well as his charioteer
And all four horses
In a furious attack.
With depressed-knot arrows,
All the Pāñcālas

54 Were attacked –
With hundreds and thousands
Of arrows – by powerful –
Atmaned Aśvatthāman.
O bull-brave Bharata!
Dire was the distress
In the ranks
Of the Pāṇḍavas

55 When they witnessed
The magnificent feat
Of Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
Rivalling the feat
Of Vāsava-Indra himself.
With a hundred arrows
He wiped out
A hundred mahā-chariot-heroes
Of the Pāñcālas,

56 With three sharp arrows
He killed three others;
Before the very eyes
Of Drupada's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna
And Phālguna-Arjuna,
Was this done
By Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,

57 Who cut down all the Pāñcālas
Who confronted him.
The decimated Pāñcālas and Sṛñjayas
Fled the battlefield,

58 Ravaged by Aśvatthāman,
The son of Droṇa,
Their chariots shattered,
Their war-flags shredded.
The victorious maha-
Chariot-hero son of Droṇa,
Aśvatthāman

59 Roared his war-cry
Which reverberated
Like the rumble of
Rain-heavy monsoon clouds.
Having slaughtered
Countless heroes,
Aśvatthāman dazzled

60 On the field
Of battle
Like Pāvaka-Agni dazzling
At the end of a yuga
After reducing all creatures
To ashes.

61 Receiving the pūjā-praise
Of the Kauravas
After slaughtering thousands
Of his enemies,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Dazzled –
He dazzled
Like Surendra-Indra
The lord of the gods
Dazzles
After defeating his enemies.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-ONE

1 Mahārāja!
(continued Sañjaya)
Pāṇḍu's sons
Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma-sena
Manoeuvred to encircle
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman.

2 With Bharadvāja's son Droṇa
Rājā Duryodhana
Launched an attack
On the Pāṇḍavas.
The clash that followed,

3 O mahārāja,
Was horrendous –
A clash to horrify
The hearts of cowards.
The Ambaṣṭhas
Mālavas
Baṅgas
Śibis
And Trigartas

4 Were despatched
To the realm of death
By infuriated Bhīma.
The difficult-to-defeat
Kṣatriya warriors
Of Abhiṣāha and Śūrasena

5 Were butchered by Bhīma,
Their blood mingling
In the battlefield mire.
O rājā!
The Yaudheyas
The hill-dwellers
The Madrakas
The Mālavas –

6 Were all despatched
By the sharp arrows
Of diadem-decked Arjuna
To the dominion of death.
Fatally wounded by
His straight-speeding
*Nārāca*-arrows,

7 Two-tusked elephants
Toppled like tall
Two-peaked mountains,
Their chopped trunks
Writhing and wriggling

8 On the ground
Like so many snakes –
A wondrous spectacle!
And gold-embroidered
Royal umbrellas
Scattered on the field

9 Made it look
Like the sky
Glittering with suns
And moons and stars
At the end of a yuga.
"Kill!"
"Cut him down!"
"Slice him in pieces!"
"Strike fearlessly!"

10 The shouts arose
Near the chariot of
Red-horsed Śoṇāśva-Droṇa.
Infuriated Droṇa invoked
The Vayavya-missile

11 And scattered his enemies
Like a mahā-tempest
Irresistibly scattering
Clusters of clouds.
Decimated by Droṇa,
The terrified Pāñcālas
Panicked and fled,

12 In the very presence
Of Bhīma
And mahā-atmaned
Pārtha-Arjuna.
Diadem-decked Arjuna
And Bhīma quickly
Rallied their ranks

13 And attacked
The army of Droṇa
With a chariot-division,
Heinous-deed-doer Bībhatsu-Arjuna
Attacking the right, and wolf-waisted
Vṛkodara-Bhīma the left flanks.

14 They rained a massive
Downpour of arrows
On Bharadvāja's son Droṇa.
The mahā-energetic
Pāñcālas and Sṛñjayas

15 And Matsyas and Somakas,
O mahārāja, reinforced
The attack. Similarly,
Many veteran chariot-heroes,
Excellent fighters,
On your son's side,

16 Leading a huge army,
Advanced to support Droṇa,
O rājā.
Decimated by diadem-
Decked Arjuna, the Bharata ranks,

17 Lacking sleep, darkness-stupefied,
Scattered in confusion.
Your son and Droṇa
Tried their best

18 But failed, O mahārāja,
To stop the rout.
The gigantic army,
Butchered by the arrows
Of Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna,

19 Fled helter-skelter
In all directions
Even as darkness slowly
Engulfted the world.
Mahārāja!
Terror-stricken,
Hundreds of earth-lords
Abandoned their vehicles
And fled for their lives.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-TWO

1 Seeing Somadatta shaking
His massive bow (continued Sañjaya),
Sātyaki ordered his charioteer:
"Drive me to Somadatta.

2 Charioteer!
I will not return today
Without killing
Mahā-powerful Somadatta
On the battlefield.
This I promise, in all truth."

3 His charioteer drove
The Sindhu-breed
Conch-white
Mind-swift
All-noise-enduring horses
To the battlefield.

4 O rājā!
Those mind-swift
And wind-swift horses
Sped Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
Like Indra's horses
In the distant past
Sped him to the massacre
Of the Daityas.

5 Seeing the Sātvata Sātyaki
Rushing towards him
On the battlefield,
Mahā-muscled Somadatta,
Not in the least perturbed,
Prepared to face him.

6 Like Parjanya the rain-god
Pouring torrential showers,
Somadatta shrouded
Śini's grandson with arrows,
Like a cloud
Obscuring the sun.

7 O bull-brave Bharata!
Unperplexed Sātyaki retaliated
With arrow-showers shrouding
The bull-brave Kaurava.

8 O rājā! With sixty arrows
Somadatta pierced Sātyaki's chest.
Sātyaki pierced him too
With keen shafts.

9 Pierced by
Each other's arrows,
The two bull-brave heroes
Looked like
Two *kiṁśuka* trees
In full flower
In the season of spring.

10 Blood-blossoms
On their bodies,
The illustrious descendant
Of the Vṛṣṇis
And the illustrious descendant
Of the Kauravas
Glared at each other
With blazing eyes.

11 Careening in maṇḍala-patterns
In their chariots,
They looked
As awesome as two
Dark rain-heavy clouds.

12 Mangled by arrows
Sticking out
All over their bodies,
O Indra-among-rajas,
They looked like
Two *śvāvidhas*,
Two dog-mauling porcupines.

13 Pierced with arrows
With golden feathers,
The two warriors,
O rājā,
Looked like two *vanaspatis*,
Two lordly trees
Replete with glow-worms
In the rainy season.

14 Resplendent with arrows,
The two mahā-chariot-heroes
On the battlefield
Were like two enraged elephants,
Like two flaming meteors.

15 Mahārāja!
In that clash
The mahā-chariot-hero
Somadatta sliced
The bow of Sātyaki
The Mādhava descendant
With a half-moon arrow.

16 He followed this
With a volley
Of twenty-five arrows,
And wasting no time
He wounded Sātyaki
With twenty more arrows.

17 Immediately
Sātyaki picked up
And nocked a powerful
New bow,
And wounded Somadatta
With five expertly
Aimed arrows.

18 O rājā!
Sātyaki smiled,
And with a broad-headed
*Bhalla*-arrow
He shredded
The golden war-flag
Of Bāhlīka's son Somadatta.

19 Seeing his war-flag
Shredded,
Unperplexed Somadatta
Pierced
Śini's grandson Sātyaki
With twenty-five arrows.

20 Infuriated,
The Sātvata Sātyaki
Sliced
The bow
Of the brilliant bowman
Somadatta
With a *kṣurapara* razor-arrow.

21 O rājā!
With a hundred
Golden-feathered
Depressed-knot arrows
He wounded Somadatta
Who by now was like
An elephant with broken tusks.

22 The mahā-powerful
Mahā-chariot-hero
Somadatta
Picked up another bow
And riddled Sātyaki
With a fresh volley
Of arrows.

23 Aroused to great anger,
Sātyaki retaliated
With his own volley,
And Somadatta
Counter-attacked
With a shower of arrows.

24 To help Sātyaki,
Bhīma fired ten arrows
At Bāhlīka's son
Somadatta.
Unperturbed Somadatta
Countered
With a volley
Of sharp arrows.

25 Enraged Bhīma, helping Sātyaki,
Released
A fearful,
New iron-studded
*Parigha*-bludgeon
At Somadatta's chest.

26 Seeing that horrendous
*Parigha*-missile hurtling
Towards him,
Somadatta of the Kauravas
Smiled
And sliced it in two.

27 With amazing speed, sundered,
The *parigha* thumped
On the ground
In two pieces
Like a huge hill
Split by a thunderbolt.

28 O rājā!
Sātyaki shattered
The bow of Somadatta
With a *bhalla*-arrow,
And with five more
Shredded his finger-armour.

29 O Bharata! With four arrows
He despatched the four
Excellent horses of Somadatta
To the realm of *preta*-spirits.

30 Lion-among-men Śini's grandson
Sātyaki, smiling,
Beheaded Somadatta's charioteer
With a broad-headed *bhalla*-arrow.

31 O rājā!
Then he fired
A mahā-terrifying
Blazing-like-fire
Golden-feathered
Stone-sharpened arrow
At Somadatta.

32 O illustrious Bharata!
That magnificent
And deadly arrow
Shot by the valiant
Grandson of Śini
Embedded itself
In Somadatta's chest.

33 Mahārāja!
Pierced by the arrow
Of mahā-muscled Sātyaki,
The mahā-chariot-hero
Somadatta
Collapsed and perished.

34 Seeing Somadatta killed,
The countless mahā-
Chariot-heroes of your army
Attacked Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
With torrents of arrows.

35 Mahārāja!
Seeing Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
Obscured by arrows,
Yudhiṣṭhira and the Pāṇḍavas,
Supported by the Prabhadrakas
And their teeming ranks,
Launched an offensive
On the army of Droṇa.

36 Before the very eyes
Of Bharadvāja's son Droṇa,
Enraged Yudhiṣṭhira
Cut down the warriors
Of your forces
With a steady stream
Of arrows.

37 Seeing his ranks
Savaged by Yudhiṣṭhira,
Droṇa,
Eyes blood-red in anger,
Counter-attacked.

38 He wounded
Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
With seven arrows.
Infuriated Yudhiṣṭhira
Retaliated
With five arrows.

39 Though severely wounded,
Mahā-muscled Droṇa,
Licking the corners of his lips,
Shredded the war-flag
And bow of Yudhiṣṭhira.

40 Finest-of-kings Yudhiṣṭhira,
Acting swiftly in crisis,
Immediately
Readied another formidable bow.

41 With a thousand arrows,
Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira,
The lord of the earth,
Wounded Drona, his charioteer
And his horses,
And damaged his chariot
And war-flag.
A stupendous feat!

42 Finest-of-the-twice-born
Droṇa, wounded
By arrows, slumped
In his chariot,
Briefly, O excellent Bharata,
Losing consciousness.

43 Then,
Finest-of-Brahmins Droṇa
Recovered,
And angrily invoked
The celestial
Vāyavya-missile.

44 O Bharata!
The brave and brilliant bowman
Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Fired a counter-missile
From his bow
That frustrated Droṇa's weapon.

45 Pāṇḍu's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Also sliced
The huge long bow
Of the Brahmin Droṇa.
Picking up another bow,
The Kṣatriya-exterminating Droṇa

46 Aimed,
But the bull-brave
Kuru-descendant Yudhiṣṭhira
Shattered it also
With a *bhalla*-arrow.
Vāsudeva-Krishna
Said
To Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira

47 "Mahā-muscled Yudhiṣṭhira!
Listen carefully
To what I say.
O finest of the Bharatas!
Stay away from Droṇa
On the battlefield.

48 Droṇa is determined
To take you captive.
I do not think it is wise
For you to confront him.

49 Droṇa will be killed
By one born to kill him.
Leave your guru Droṇa
And go to where
Rājā Suyodhana-Duryodhana is.

50 Rājās should fight rājās,
Not those who are not rājās.
Kuntī's son!
March there with
Your elephants, horses and chariots.

51 Meanwhile,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
And chariot-lion-hero Bhīma,
With my help,
Are busy fighting the Kauravas."

52 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
Listened to the advice
Of Vāsudeva-Krishna,
Pondered it briefly,
Worried about the vicious war,

53 And marched to where
Foe-exterminating Bhīma
Was playing havoc
In your ranks,
Like gaping-jawed Antaka
The god of doom.

54 Thundering on the ground
In his chariot like rain-heavy clouds
At summer-end, rumbling
In all the ten directions

55 Pāṇḍu's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Stationed himself near
The flank
Of foe-exterminating Bhīma.
That night
Droṇa also began
His slaughter of the ranks
Of the Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-THREE

1 In the gory
And gruesome battle
(continued Sañjaya)
That continued,
O lord of the earth
While the world was covered
In pitch dark,

2 The warriors could barely
Make out each other.
Only by guessing
And calling out each other's names
Could they know who was who.

3 While the horripilating
Butchery went on,
And men and elephants
And horses perished,
Heroic Droṇa
Karṇa
Kṛpa
Bhīma
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
And Sātyaki,

4 O excellent king,
Attacked and counter-attacked
Each other's armies.
Decimated by those mahā-
Chariot-heroes, the warriors

5 Panicked and fled
In the pitch dark.
Blindly,
Unknowingly,
They fled in all directions.

6 Mahārāja!
Even as they ran
They were pursued
And butchered.
Thousands of mahā-
Chariot-heroes
Slaughtered each other,
Lost in the darkness.

7 All this happened
As a result of the counsels
Of your foolish son.
O Bharata!
With all-enveloping darkness
Descending, warriors and leaders
Moved about stupefied.

8 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked:
"With the Pāṇḍavas ravaging
Your armies in the darkness,
What was the state of your mind?
How did you feel?

9 With gloom thickly
Prevailing everywhere,
The entire earth shrouded,
How, Sañjaya,
Did the Pāṇḍavas and my warriors
Make out each other?"

10 Ordered by their leaders
(Sañjaya replied),
The survivors of the carnage
Rallied
And re-formed battle ranks.

11 Droṇa
in the front
Śalya
the rear
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
And Subala's son Śakuni
the right and left flanks –
Thus Raja Duryodhana advanced
That night at the head of his army.

12 Lord of the earth!
Duryodhana encouraged
And inspired the foot-soldiers
With these words:
"Leave your weapons.
Pick up flaming torches."

13 Obeying his command,
They gladly
Held aloft flaming torches.
Hosts of gods
Gandharvas
Ṛṣis
Su-ṛṣis
Vidyādharas
Apsarās

14 Nāgas and Yakṣas and Uragas
And Kinnaras also gladly held aloft
Flaming torches. Perfumed oil lamps
Descended on the earth from the hands
Of devīs protecting the ten directions.

15 These were lamps
Lit specially
By Nārada and Parvata
For the convenience
Of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas.
The radiance of these lamps
Illuminated
The army ranks.

16 The army ranks
Dazzled with glittering
Expensive ornaments
And blazing celestial missiles.
Five lamps in each chariot,
Three on each elephant,

17 And a mahā-lamp
On each horse – that was how
The Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas
Were illuminated.
In no time at all the ranks
Stood bathed in light.

18 The warriors
In the glare of light
From the oil-filled lamps
In the hands of foot-soldiers –
They dazzled
Like clouds at night
When lightning flashes through them.

19 O Indra-among-rājās!
In the midst of his army
Flooded with light,
Droṇa in golden armour
Shone like fire,
Like the scorching sun
At high noon.

20 Dazzlingly reflecting
The light of the lamps
Were the gold ornaments
Gold *niṣka* neck-chains
Golden bows
And gold-plated weapons.

21 O descendant of Ajamīḍha!
The light of these lamps
Falling on maces,
Saikya-slings,
*Parigha*-missiles,
Chariots
And *śakti*-spears
As they moved and swung –
Transformed them too
Into so many lamps.

22 O rājā!
Umbrellas and yak-tails and swords
And flaming torches and gold garlands
In the flickering light of the lamps –
An enchanting sight!

23 O king! The army –
In the dazzle of weapons
The dazzle of lamps
The dazzle of ornaments –
An enchanting sight!

24 Polished and sharp
And blood-smeared weapons
In the hands of warriors
Scintillated and glowed
Like streaks of lightning
In the sky
At the end of summer.

25 The shaking faces
Of warriors running
At great speed
To cut down their foes –
Leaping at them –
Looked like mahā-lotuses
Swaying in the wind.

26 O Bharata! Your army blazed
In the light of the lamps
In mahā-fearful splendour
Like the massive sun
In the midst of a conflagration
In a mahā-forest.

27 Seeing our army
Lit up by flaming torches,
Pārtha-Arjuna ordered
His foot-soldiers also
To do the same.

28 Seven lamps
on each elephant
Ten lamps
on each chariot
Two on the buck
of each horse
And others
near the flagstaff.

29 Foot-soldiers
With flaming torches
Lit up the front
The rear
Both flanks
Of the ranks
Of Pāṇḍu's sons.

30 The foot-soldiers
Of both armies
Moved within the ranks
With flaming torches
In their hands.
Others also mingled
With divisions of elephants
And chariots and horses,

31 Illuminating
The entire Pāṇḍava army.
The brilliance
Of the dazzle of one army
Enhanced the brilliance
Of the dazzle of the other,

32 Like the dazzle
Of the ray-rich sun
Enhancing the dazzle
Of the fire-god Agni.
The dazzle crossed earth, inter-space
And the ten directions.

33 Your army
And their army
Stood clearly visible
In that flood of light.
O rājā!
Woken by the light
That reached the regions
Of the sky,
Gods

34 Gandharvas
Yakṣas
Anti-gods
Siddhas
And all the apsarās
Came to witness
What was happening.
Gods and gandharvas
Yakṣas
Indras-among-the-anti-gods
Apsarās

35 Crowded
The battlefield
Along with the hosts
Of warring heroes
Fated to perish –
And the ground
Looked like a second heaven.
Chariots and horses
And lamp-lit elephants
And enraged warriors
And galloping wounded steeds –

36 A massive congregation
Of soldiers
And chariots
And horses
And elephants
In battle formation –
Like the gods
Facing the anti-gods
In the distant past.

37 That battle at night
Was fought
As if in daytime
Overshadowed by clouds.
*Śakti*-spears
the fierce winds
The maha-chariot-heroes
the clouds
The trumpeting
of elephants
And neighing of steeds
the thunder
Gushing blood
the torrential rain . . .

38 The mahātmā twice-born Droṇa
Blazing with exquisite energy
Persecuted the Pāṇḍavas
Like the torrid mid-day sun
At the end of the monsoon.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-FOUR

1 So
(continued Sañjaya)
In the dust-
And-darkness-dimmed battlefield,
Now lit up,
The antagonists clashed,
Eager to kill each other.

2 O rājā!
Armed with lances and swords
And many other weapons,
They glared their anger
At each other.

3 Thousands of flaming torches
Glowed on the battlefield.
They were placed
On gold-handled, gem-studded staffs,
And fed copiously
With perfumed oil.

4 O Bharata!
Even more richly radiant
Were the lamps
Of the gods and gandharvas.
The battlefield blazed
With the beauty of the planet-
And-star-studded sky.

5 With the blaze
Of those meteor-like torches,
The field was resplendently aflame
Like the earth and the worlds
Burning on the day
Of final doom.

6 All the ten directions
Blazed
With the glow
Of the lamps
Like trees in the monsoon
Scintillating
With fireflies.

7 In single combat,
One by one,
Brave warriors
Challenged their adversaries.
Elephants faced elephants,
Horses encountered horses,

8 And chariot-heroes joyfully
Challenged chariot-heroes.
That horrendous night,
On the command
Of your son Duryodhana,

9 The four-fold armies
Clashed
In a gory battle.
Mahārāja! Arjuna started
His slaughter of the Kaurava forces

10 And their earth-lord allies.
"When my son's army,"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"Was penetrated

11 By difficult-to-defeat Arjuna,
How did all of you feel?
What did you do
When the foe-persecuter
Breached your ranks?

12 What did Duryodhana
Think right to do then?
What foe-annihilators
Came forward to stop
Heroic Arjuna?

13 Who were the ones
Who protected Droṇa
When white-horsed Śvetavāhana-
Arjuna pierced our ranks,
Who protected his right flank,
Who his left?

14 Which hero-crushing heroes
Protected his rear?
And who were the ones
Guarding the front?

15 The illustrious
Never-defeated-in-battle
Brilliant bowman
Lion-among-men Droṇa
Seemed to be dancing
In his chariot as he
Penetrated the Pāñcāla ranks.

16 He swept through the ranks
Of the Pāñcāla chariot-heroes
Like a shooting star,
Consuming them
In the fire of his wrath –
How did death claim that hero?

17 O charioteer!
According to you,
Our enemies are never perplexed,
They are invincible and cheerful,
They are always confident.
You never say this
About my sons.

18 All I hear from you
Is how my chariot-heroes
Were killed
Or scattered
Or un-charioted
In every battle they fought."

19 Mahārāja!
(Sañjaya replied)
Realising that Droṇa
Was determined to fight,
That night
Duryodhana said
To his brothers
True to their vows,

20 And to Karṇa and Vṛṣasena
And the Madra-rājā Śalya
And Durdharśa
And Dīrghabāhu
And all who faithfully
Followed them:

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21 “Manoeuvre carefully
And protect Droṇa
From the rear,
Hārdikya-Kṛtavarman
On his right chariot-wheel,
And Śalya his left.”

22 To the surviving
Trigarta mahā-chariot-heroes
Were given orders by your son
To protect the front ranks
Of Droṇa:

23 “The ācārya is fully alert.
So are the Pāṇḍavas.
While he is busy
Slaying his enemies,
Be alert. Protect him.

24 Droṇa is illustrious and powerful
And versatile. He can defeat
The *tridaśa*-gods. Pāṇḍu’s sons
And the Somakas are nothing to him.

25 Join ranks!
Spare no effort,
O mahā-chariot heroes,
To protect Droṇa
From the Pāñcāla
Mahā-chariot-hero
Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

25 I see no one
In the army
Of the Pāṇḍavas
Except Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Who can challenge
Droṇa
On the battlefield.

27 Concentrate your energies
To protect
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa.
Protected by us,
He will destroy the Pāṇḍavas
And Sṛñjaya and Somakas.

28 When we wipe out
The Sṛñjayas who head
The Pāṇḍava ranks
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Will see to it
That Dhṛṣṭadyumna is killed.
This much is sure.

29 The mahā-chariot-hero
Rādhā's son Karṇa
Will kill Arjuna.
I will kill Bhīma
Who has dedicated himself
To fight to the death.

30 As for the rest
Of the enfeebled Pāṇḍavas –
I will kill them too.
This victory of mine –
It will live for ever.
Go! Protect
The mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa."

31 O finest of the Bharatas!
With these words
On that dark night
Your son Duryodhana
Ordered his forces
To advance to battle.

32 O excellent Bharata!
A killing carnage
Took place that night
Between the armies,
Each eager to win.

33 Arjuna victimised the Kauravas
With countless weapons,
And the Kauravas retaliated,
Both causing grievous wounds.

34 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Attacked the Pāñcāla-rājā Drupada,
And Bharadvāja's son Droṇa
Attacked the Sṛñjayas,
With curved *saṁnata*-arrows.

35 O Bharata!
From one direction
The Pāṇḍava army,
From another direction
The Kaurava army
Advanced – and clashed
In a gory
And cacophonous battle.

36 That horrendous
And fearful clash –
None of us till now
Had seen or heard
Anything like it –
Not now, not earlier.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-FIVE

1 O lord of the earth! (said Sañjaya)
While that all-creature-killing clash
In the night continued,
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira

2 Said to his allies
The Pāñcālas and Somakas:
"Go! Attack Droṇa!
Attack him and kill him."

3 O rājā!
As ordered,
The Pāñcālas and Sṛñjayas
Swooped on Droṇa
With ear-splitting war-cries.

4 All of them,
Roaring thunderously,
Brimming with anger,
Full of śakti
And valour and determination,
Attacked Droṇa.

5 Hṛdika's son Kṛtavarman
Saw Yudhiṣṭhira advancing
Against Droṇa
Like a musth elephant,
And rushed to protect Droṇa.

6 O rājā!
Bhūri of the Kauravas
Confronted
Sini's grandson Sātyaki
Who was hurling showers
Of arrows at his foes.

7 O rājā!
Vaikartana-Karṇa
Blocked the path
Of the valiant
Mahā-chariot-hero
Son of Pāṇḍu, Sahadeva,
As he sped
To capture Droṇa.

8 And Duryodhana-rājā
Rushed to block
Bhīma-sena
Who was advancing
Like Antaka the day of doom,
Like the god of death himself.

9 O rājā!
Subala's son Śakuni
Confronted
Finest-of-warriors
Versed-in-all-war-weapons
Nakula.

10 O rājā!
Śaradvat's son Kṛpa
Confronted
Finest-of-chariot-heroes
Śikhaṇḍin
As he advanced
In his chariot.

11 Mahārāja!
With all his prowess
Duḥśāsana
Confronted Prativindhya
Whose chariot
Was pulled by horses
As beautiful as peacocks.

12 Mahārāja!
Aśvatthāman
Blocked the path
Of Bhīma's son
The rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca
Who was skilled hundred-fold
In maya-mongering magic.

13 In that clash
Vṛṣasena
Blocked the path
Of the mahā-chariot-hero
Drupada
As he advanced
With a host of followers
To kill Droṇa.

14 O Bharata!
Infuriated
The Madra-rājā Salya
Confronted Virāṭa
Advancing to kill Droṇa

15 With a deluge of arrows
Citrasena
Blocked the advance
Of Nakula's energetic son
Śatānīka
Who was determined
To kill Droṇa.

16 Mahārāja!
The Indra-of-rākṣasas
Alambuṣa
Blocked the advance
Of finest-of-warriors
Mahā-chariot-hero Arjuna.

17 The Pāñcāla prince
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Blocked the advance
Of the brilliant bowman
Foe-exterminating
Always-confident
Droṇa.

18 O rājā!
Your maha-chariot-heroes also
Blocked the advance
Of the mahā-chariot-heroes
Of the Pāṇḍavas
With their prowess.

19 Hundreds of thousands
Of elephant-warriors
Clashed head on
With hundreds of thousands
Of their foes,
And so began
A carnival of mutual mahā-carnage.

20 O rājā!
In that night
Of total darkness,
The horses clashing
With horses
Looked like
Winged mountains colliding.

21 Mahārāja!
Flailing lances
*Śakti*-spears
And swords
And roaring war-cries
Horse-riders swooped
On horse-riders.

22 Innumerable soldiers
Battered each other
To death with clubs
And maces and other weapons
On the battlefield.

23 Like the landmass
Of the shore
Curbing the restless
Waves of the ocean,
Hṛdika's son
Enraged Kṛtavarman
Contained
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira.

24 Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Wounded Kṛtavarman
First with five arrows;
Then, O excelling monarch,
He fired twenty more
At Hṛdika-Kṛtavarman
Shouting, "Wait! Wait!"

25 O respected one! *Māriṣa*!
Enraged Kṛtavarman
Fired a *bhalla*-arrow
Which sliced Yudhiṣṭhira's bow,
And wounded
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
With seven arrows.

26 Readying another bow,
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira,
O mahārāja,
Wounded Hṛdika-Kṛtavarman
In the chest
With ten arrows.

27 O respected one!
Wounded in battle
By Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira,
The Madhu-dexendant
Kṛtavarman trembled
And angrily retaliated
With seven arrows.

28 Pṛthā-Kuntī son Yudhiṣṭhira
Sliced
His bow and hand-armour,
And fired five sharp
Stone-whetted arrows
At him.

29 They slid through
His precious, gold-
Decorated armour
Like fierce snakes
Into an ant-hill
And embedded themselves
In the earth.

30 In the blink of an eye,
Kṛtavarman
Fitted another bow
And wounded
Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira
With sixty arrows
And his charioteer
With nine.

31 The tremendously powerful
Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira,
O best of the Bharatas,
Placed his bow
Inside his chariot,
And flung a snake-like
*Śakti*-spear at Kṛtavarman.

32 Hurled by the Pāṇḍava,
The gold-decorated spear
Sliced through the right arm
Of Kṛtavarman
And slid into the earth.

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33 In the meantime,
Pṛthā-Kuntī son
Yudhiṣṭhira
Picked up his bow
And shrouded
Hṛdika's son Kṛtavarman
With a volley of arrows.

34 In half the time it takes
To blink an eye,
The brave Vṛṣṇi chariot-
Hero Kṛtavarman
Deprived Yudhiṣṭhira
Of his horses,
Charioteer and chariot.

35 Pāṇḍu's eldest son Yudhiṣṭhira
Lifted sword and shield.
Madhu's descendant Kṛtavarman
Quickly
Sliced both
With sharp arrows.

36 Aiming a golden-
Handled *tomara*-lance,
Yudhiṣṭhira swiftly
Hurled it
At Hṛdika's son
Kṛtavarman.

37 Hārdikya-Kṛtavarman
Saw the lance
Speeding towards him,
Unerringly flung
By Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
And, smiling,
He sliced it
In mid-flight.

38 He showered Dharma's son
Yudhiṣṭhira with thousands of arrows.
Enraged,
He sliced the armour
Of Yudhiṣṭhira
With sharp arrows.

39 Fragmented by the arrows
Of Hārdikya-Kṛtavarman,
O rājā,
The expensive gold-
Plated armour of Yudhiṣṭhira
Scattered on the field
Like stars
Sprinkling the earth.

40 His armour
Shredded,
His chariot
Shattered,
Himself wounded
By arrows,
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Fled the field.

41 Having routed mahātmā Yudhiṣṭhira,
Kṛtavarman resumed his duty
To protect the chariot-wheel
Of mahā-ātmaned Droṇa.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-SIX

1 O rājā!
(continued Sañjaya)
Bhūrī blocked
Śini's grandson Sātyaki
Who was rushing to battle
Like a powerful elephant.

2 Incensed Sātyaki
Wounded Bhūrī in the chest
With five sharp arrows,
Making him bleed
Profusely.

3 The Kuru descendant
Bhūrī also
Swiftly wounded
Śini's difficult-to-defeat
Grandson Sātyaki
With ten sharp arrows.

4 Mahārāja!
Eyes blood-red with rage,
Drawing their bows taut
With tremendous energy,
The two warriors
Afflicted each other.

5 Mahārāja!
One looked like Yama
The god of death-doom,
The other like Antaka,
The lord of doom-death,
As they wrathfully
Deluged each other
With arrow-showers.

6 Mahārāja!
They shrouded each other
With volleys
Of arrow-showers.
For a brief while
They seemed to be
Equally matched.

7 Then, infuriated,
Śini's grandson Śaineya-Sātyaki,
O mahārāja,
Smilingly sliced
The bow of the mahā-
Ātmaned Kaurava Bhūrī.

8 After slicing the bow,
He wounded
His antagonist Bhūrī
In the chest
With sharp arrows,
Shouting,
"Wait! Don't move!"

9 Foe-afflicting Bhūrī,
Deeply afflicted
By his foe's
Powerful attach,
Nocked another bow
And grievously wounded
The Sātvata Sātyaki.

10 *Viśampate*! O lord of the world!
Wounding Sātvata-Sātyaki
With three arrows,
He seemed to smile
As he shattered
His enemy's bow
With a sharp *bhalla*-arrow.

11 Mahārāja!
Enraged at the destruction
Of his bow, Sātyaki
Aimed and hurled
A mahā-swift *śakti*-spear
At his enemy's chest.

12 His body mangled
By the *śakti*,
Bhūrī toppled
From his chariot,
Like the red planet
Lohita-Mars
Dropping from the sky.

13 The mahā-chariot-hero
Aśvatthāman
Witnessed the slaughter
Of Bhūrī,
And drove fiercely
Towards Śini's grandson
Sātyaki.

14 O lord of men! *Narādhipa!*
Shouting "Wait! Don't move!"
Aśvatthāman deluged
Śini's grandson with arrows,
Like a cloud pelting
Meru mountain with rain.

15 O rājā!
Seeing Aśvatthāman
Oppressing
Śini's grandson Sātyaki
With a fierce chariot offensive,
The mahā-chariot-hero
Ghaṭotkaca shouted:

16 "Wait! Wait!
Don't move, son of Droṇa!
You will not escape alive
From me today.
I will kill you
Like six-faced Kārtikeya
Killing the buffalo-
Anti-god Mahiṣa.

17 Today I will end
Your *śraddhā* for battle."
Saying this, the foe-exterminating
Rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca,
Eyes red with anger,

18 Boiling with wrath,
Pursued Aśvatthāman
The son of Droṇa
Like a lion pouncing
On an elephant.
Aiming at the chariot-axle,
Ghaṭotkaca showered arrows

19 At the chariot
Of Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
Like a cloudburst
Pouring rain.
With snake-venomous arrows,
That deluge of arrows
On Aśvatthāman's head

20 Was neutralised
By Droṇa's son
On the battlefield.
With hundreds of arrows
Crafted to mutilate
The body's vital organs.

21 Aśvatthāman wounded
The foe-exterminating
Indra-among-rākṣasas
Ghaṭotkaca.
Mangled by those arrows
In the middle of the field,
The rākṣasa,

22 O mahārāja,
Looked like a porcupine
Bristling with quills.
Seething with anger,
The valiant son
Of Bhīma,
Bhaimaseni-Ghaṭotkaca,

23 Roaring like thunder,
Mutilated Droṇa's son
Drauṇi-Aśvatthāman with arrows –
Razor-arrows and half-moon arrows,
*Nārāca*-arrows,
*Śili*-worm-faced arrows,

24 Boar-eared arrows,
*Nālīka*-arrows,
*Vaikarṇa*-arrows
And many others.
Like a storm
Scattering massive clouds,

25 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
With his senses
Perfectly controlled,
Yet roaring like thunder
In righteous indignation,
Scattered that deluge
Of difficult-to-endure,
Incomparable, lightning-like weapons
With his mantra-charged missiles –

26 Destroying them all
Like a thundering mahā-whirlwind.
What an arrow-duel
It was
In the inter-space realm –

27 A horrific spectacle,
O mahārāja,
That stirred the thrill
Of horripilating pleasure
In the warriors
On the battlefield.
The sparks that flashed
Off clashing weapons

28 Flicked like glow-worms
In the dark night.
Shrouding all the directions
With his countless arrows,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,

29 Eager to work
For the welfare
Of your sons,
Overcast the chariot
And the movements
Of the rākṣasa
Ghaṭotkaca.

30 The clash that took place
On that pitch-dark night
Between Droṇa's son
And the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca
Resembled the clash
Between Śakra-Indra
And Prahlāda.
Wounding Droṇa's son
With ten arrows, Ghaṭotkaca,

31 Flaming with anger,
Looked like the doomsday-
Fire of Kāla.
Deeply wounded by the arrows
Of the rākṣasa,
The mahā-powerful.

32 Son of Droṇa trembled
Like a tree in a storm.
Clutching the flag-staff
For support,
He fell down unconscious.

33 O lord of men! *Janādhipa*!
All the warriors
Broke into wails of
"Hai! Hai!"
*Viśāmpate*! Lord of the world!
All of them thought
Aśvatthāman was dead.

34 Seeing Aśvatthāman
Sprawled unconscious,
The Pāñcālas
And the Sṛñjayas
Screamed their lion-cries
Of victory.

35 But maha-powerful
Foe-exterminating
Aśvatthāman
Regained consciousness
And pulling his bow-string
Tight
With his left hand

36 Till it touched
His ear
He targeted Ghaṭotkaca
With a surpassing arrow
As deadly
As the rod of Yama
The god of death.

37 O lord of the earth!
That admirable arrow
Ripped through the chest
Near the heart
Of the rākṣasa
And replete with lovely feathers
Slid into the ground.

38 Mahārāja!
Mangled by the brilliant.
In battle son of Drona,
The supremely, powerful
Indra-of-rākṣasas Ghaṭotkaca
Crouched inside his chariot.

39 Seeing Hiḍimbā's son
Ghaṭotkaca near-unconscious,
His frightened charioteer
Swiftly drove him away
From the presence
Of Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman.

40 Grievously injuring
The Indra-of-rākṣasas
Ghaṭotkaca
On the field of battle,
The mahā-chariot-hero
Son of Droṇa –
Aśvatthāman –
Roared his war-cry.

41 O Bharata!
Offered pūjā-praise
By the warriors and your sons,
The body of Aśvatthāman
Seemed to glow
Like the midday sun.

42 Rājā Duryodhana himself
Wounded Bhīma
With sharp arrows
As Bhīma advanced
Toward the chariot
Of Bharadvāja's son Droṇa.

43 O respected one! *Mārīṣa*!
Bhīma retaliated
By wounding Duryodhana
With ten arrows.
Duryodhana countered
With twenty arrows.

44 Like the sun
And the moon
In the sky
Obscured by clouds
These two heroes
On the battlefield
Were obscured
By volleys of arrows.

45 O finest of the Bharatas!
Rājā Duryodhana
Wounded Bhīma
With five arrows,
Shouting, "Wait!
Don't move!"

46 Bhīma retaliated
With ten arrows
That sliced his bow
And shredded his flag,
And with ninety
Depressed-knot arrows
He grievously wounded
The incomparable Kaurava.

47 Finest-of-Bharatas Duryodhana
Readied another massive bow
And angrily targeted Bhima-sena
With sharp arrows,
Harassing him in the presence
Of all the brilliant bowmen.

48 Repulsing all those arrows
Of Duryodhana,
Bhīma retaliated
With twentyfive of his own.

49 O respected one! *Māriṣa*!
Incensed with rage,
Duryodhana sliced Bhīma's
Bow with a razor-
Shaped missile.

50 And wounded him
With ten arrows.
Mahā-powerful Bhīma
Nocked another bow

51 And attacked
The Kaurava king
With a volley
Of seven arrows.
With great dexterity
Duryodhana fragmented
That bow also.

52 Mahārāja!
The second
And third
And fourth
And fifth bows
Picked up by Bhīma
Were sliced,

53 O mahārāja,
By your son Duryodhana
Flushed and yearning
For victory.
His bows
Repeatedly pulverised,
Bhīma

54 Picked up an all-
Iron *śakti*-spear,
As fearsome
As death's own sister,
Blazing beautiful
Like fire itself.

55 Bisecting the sky
Like the forehead parting
In a girl's tresses,
The *śakti*-spear sped,
But the Kaurava Duryodhana
Splintered it mid-flight
Into three fragments.

56 The three worlds witnessed
And the mahā-ātmaned hero
Bhima witnessed
The magnificent feat.
Mahārāja!
Bhīma brandished
His mahā-powerful mace,

57 Whirled it
And hurled it
At Duryodhana's chariot.
Instantaneously
That swift-speeding mace
Crushed your son's

58 Charioteer
Horses
And chariot.
O Indra-among-rājās!
Your son,
Fearing Bhīma,
Fled,

59 And climbed
Into the chariot
Of mahā-ātmaned Nandaka.
Thinking your mahā-
Chariot-hero son
To be dead,
Bhīma

60 Roared his lion-cry
Of victory
Before the Kaurava warriors.
Your warriors also,
Believing their king
To be dead,

61 Raised loud laments
Of "Hai! Hai!"
On the battlefield.
O rājā!
Hearing the wails
Of the terrified soldiers
And the victory-cries
Of mahā-ātmaned Bhīma,

62 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira also
Believed Suyodhana-Duryodhana
To have died,
And speedily drove
To where Pṛthā-Kuntī's son
Bhīma the wolf-waisted one was.

63 The Pāñcālas
The Kekayas
The Matsyas
The Sṛñjayas –
All eager to fight –
Sped towards Droṇa.

64 A horrendous mahā-clash
Took place between
Droṇa and his enemies.
Both sides,
In pitch-darkness,
Slaughtered each other.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-SEVEN

1 O Bharata!
(continued Sañjaya)
O lord of the earth! *Viśāmpate!*
Vaikartana-Karṇa
Blocked the advance
Of Sahadeva speeding
Towards Droṇa.

2 Sahadeva wounded Rādhā's son
Karṇa with nine arrows,
And again with ten
Depressed-knot arrows.

3 Karṇa retaliated
With a hundred
Depressed-knot arrows,
And dexterously
Splintered his bow.

4 Mādrī's illustrious son
Sahadeva
Nocked another bow
And wounded Karṇa
With twenty arrows.
An astonishing feat!

5 With depressed-knot arrows
Karṇa killed his horses,
And with a *bhalla*-arrow
Sent Sahadeva's charioteer
To the realm of Yama.

6 Unchalrioted Sahadeva
Picked up a sword and shield.
Karṇa, smiling, destroyed
These also with arrows.

7 Infuriated Sahadeva
Whirled a mahā-dreadful
Gold-ornamented
Mahā-mace
And hurled it
At the chariot
Of Vaikartana-Karṇa.

8 With a volley
Of swift arrows
Karṇa stopped in mid-flight
The mace hurled
By Sahadeva.
It thudded on the ground.

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9 Seeing his mace shattered,
Sahadeva speedily
Hurled a *śakti*-spear
At Karṇa,
Which also
Karṇa pulverised
With his arrows.

10 Mādrī's son Sahadeva
Quickly leapt
From his splendid chariot
And aflame with anger
At the sight of Karṇa
Facing him,

11 He lifted
A chariot-wheel
And hurled it
At Adhiratha's son Karṇa.
Swirling fiercely
Like Kāla-cakra
The wheel of Cosmic Time,

12 It was shattered
By thousands of arrows
From the Sūta's son Karṇa
Fragmented
By the arrows
Of the mahā-ātmaned
Charioteer's son,

13 It was followed by
The chariot-shaft
The horses' harness
The chariot-yokes
Of all kinds
As well as limbs
Of elephants and horses
And corpses of warriors –

14 All of which were blocked
By Karṇa's arrows.
Realising that he
Had no weapons left,
Mādrī's son

15 Sahadeva,
Frustrated by the arrows
Of Karṇa,
Withdrew from the field.
O bull-brave Bharata!
Rādhā's son Karṇa
Quickly overtook him,

16 And said to him,
O lord of the earth,
Smiling as he spoke:
"Confused coward!
Stop fighting
Chariot-heroes!

17 Son of Mādrī!
Fight your equals,
Not your betters!
Don't ignore
What I say!"
Prodding Sahadeva
With one end
Of his bow,
He added:

18 Mādrī's son! Arjuna
Is fighting the Kauravas.
Run to him.
Or, better still,
Go home."

19 With these words,
The eminent chariot-hero
Karṇa
Advanced swiftly
Against the Pāñcālas
And the Pāṇḍavas,
Determined to destroy them.

20 He could have killed
Sahadeva had he wanted,
O rājā,
But the mahā-renowned
True-to-his-vow Karṇa
Remembered his promise
To Kuntī – and refrained.

21 O rājā!
Afflicted-by-arrows and
Troubled-in-mind
By Karṇa's arrowy insults,
Sahadeva lost all desire
To live.

22 Nonetheless
The mahā-chariot-hero
Sahadeva
Climbed into the chariot
Of the mahā-ātmaned
Pāñcāla prince
Janamejaya.

23 The Madra-rājā Śalya
Shrouded with arrows
Virāṭa
Who was advancing swiftly
With his huge army
To kill Droṇa.

24 O rājā!
The battle that took place
Between
These two brilliant bowmen
Resembled the battle
In the distant past
Between Vāsava-Indra and Jambha.

25 Mahārāja!
Swiftly and dexterously
The Madra-rājā Salya
Wounded
The army leader Virāṭa
With a hundred knotted arrows.

26 O rājā!
Virāṭa retaliated
With an initial volley
Of nine arrows,
Then seventy-three,
And finally a hundred.

27 The Madra-rājā
In that clash
Killed all the four horses
Of his chariot,
And with two arrows
He killed the charioteer
And shredded
His enemy's umbrella.

28 The mahā-chariot-hero
Virāṭa
Leapt to the ground
From his horseless chariot
And stood firm
Twanging his bow-string
And shooting sharp arrows.

29 Seeing his brother's chariot
Put out of action,
Śatānīka rushed
To the side of his brother,
Watched by the warriors
On the battlefield.

30 Fatally wounding
Śatānīka
With countless arrows
In that mahā-gory clash,
The Madra-rājā Salya
Despatched him
To the realm of Yama.

31 With heroic Śatānīka killed,
The surpassing chariot-hero
Virāṭa
Quickly climbed into
The flag-garlanded chariot
Of his brother.

32 His eyes rolling large
In rage,
His war-vigour
Redoubled,
Virāṭa shrouded
The Madra-rājā's chariot
With swarms of arrows.

33 The incensed Madra-rājā
Śalya retaliated
With a single
Knotted arrow
That penetrated
The chest
Of the army-leader Virāṭa.

34 Mahārāja!
Wounded Virāṭa
Slumped
In the back
Of his chariot.
O bull-brave Bharata!
He was dazed,
Only half-conscious.

35 His charioteer
Drove the arrow-stricken hero
Away from the battlefield.
O Bharata!
That night Virāṭa's
Large army retreated,

36 Relentlessly attacked
By Śalya
With hundreds of arrows.
Witnessing that rout
Were Vāsudeva-Krishna
And Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

37 O Indra-among-rājās!
They hurried
To where Śalya was.
Advancing against them,
O rājā,
Was the Indra-among-rākṣasas
Alambuṣa

38 In a magnificent
Eight-wheeled chariot
Pulled by horse-faced
Flesh-eating Piśācas
Of horrific appearance,

39 With blood-
Red banners,
Blood-red
Flower-garlands,
Structured entirely
Of black iron,
Draped all over
With bear-skins.

40 Atop the flagstaff
Perched a fierce
Monster-vulture
With multi-coloured wings
And glaring eyes,
Shrieking.

41 O rājā!
That rākṣasa
Who looked like
A massive heap
Of scattered coal lumps
Blocked the advance
Of Arjuna
Like Adrirāṭ-Himālaya
The king of mountains
Blocking a storm,

42 By showering arrows
On Arjuna's head.
A mahā-battle followed
Between man and rākṣasa,

43 Which delighted
All the spectators,
O Bharata –
Vultures
Crows
Cranes
Owls
*Kaṅkas*
Jackals . . .

44 O Bharata!
With a hundred arrows
Arjuna wounded the rākṣasa,
And with nine sharp arrows
Sliced his war-flag.

45 With three arrows
He killed the charioteer,
With three more destroyed
The three-bannered chariot,
With one the bow,
With four the four horses.

46 The rākṣasa
Nocked another bow,
Which also Arjuna
Sliced in two.
Uncharioted, the rākṣasa
Brandished his sword,
Which Arjuna sliced
In two also.

47 O bull-brave Bharata!
With four sharp arrows
Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Arjuna
Wounded that Indra-
Among-rākṣasas
Who fled in terror.

48 O rājā!
Having routed him,
Arjuna showered men,
Elephants and horses
With arrows, and sped
Towards Droṇa.

49 Mahārāja!
Struck by the prowess
Of Pāṇḍava Arjuna,
The soldiers toppled
Like trees felled
In a huge storm.

50 Lord of the earth! *Viśāmpate!*
Ravaged by the attack
Of mahā-ātmaned
Phālguna-Arjuna,
The soldiers of the army
Of your sons fled.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-EIGHT

1 O Bharata!
Your son Citrasena
Blocked Nakula's son Śatānīka
Who was savaging your soldiers
With sharp arrows.

2 Nakula's son Śatānīka
Wounded Citrasena
With five arrows,
And Citrasena retaliated
With ten sharp arrows.

3 Mahārāja!
With nine sharp arrows
Citrasena grievously
Wounded Śatānīka
In the chest.

4 Nakula's son Śatānīka
With depressed-knot arrows,
Ripped the armour
Off Citrasena's body
A wonderful feat!

5 O king! O Indra-among-rājās!
Stripped of his armour,
Citrasena looked as lovely
As a snake that has sloughed
Its skin in the right season.

6 Mahārāja!
With keen shafts
Nakula's son shredded
The war-flag and sliced
The bow of Citrasena
Who was battling assiduously
For victory.

7 Mahārāja!
His bow and armour
Sliced, the mahā-
Chariot-hero Citrasena
Readied another bow
Which had the power
To disable any foe.

8 Citrasena, the mahā-
Chariot-hero of the Bharatas,
Wounded Śatānīka
The son of Nakula
With a volley
Of nine arrows.

9 The valiant mahā-
Chariot-hero Śatānīka
In a fit of anger,
O finest of men,
O respected one,
Killed Citrasena's charioteer
And his four horses.

10 Leaping down
From his chariot,
The powerful maha-
Chariot-hero Citrasena
Targeted Śatānīka
With twenty-five arrows.

11 Even as he performed
This remarkable karma,
Nakula's son
Śatānīka
Sliced his gem-
Studded bow
With a half-moon arrow.

12 Bereft of
Bow
Chariot
Horses
And charioteer
Citrasena climbed quickly
Into the chariot
Of Hṛdīka's mahā-
Ātmaned son Kṛtavarman.

13 Vṛṣasena meanwhile
Showered a volley of arrows
On the mahā-
Chariot-hero Drupada
As he advanced
To attack Droṇa.

14 O defectless one!
Yajñasena-Drupada wounded
Karṇa's mahā-chariot-hero son
Vṛṣasena in the chest and arms
With sixty arrows.

15 Seething with anger,
Vṛṣasena retaliated
By wounding chariot-
Based Yajñasena-Drupada
In the chest
With countless arrows.

16 Mahārāja!
They looked magnificent,
Those two heroes,
Pierced with arrows –
Like two porcupines
With bristling quills.

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17 They looked magnificent,
Incredibly so,
Those two warriors –
With bodies drenched
With blood
Streaming from wounds
Caused by gold-feathered
Needle-sharp arrows.

18 They looked magnificent,
Those two –
Like two radiant
*Kalpa-vṛkṣa*
Wish-fulfilling trees
In Indra's heaven
Like two blossoming
*Kiṁśuka* flames-of-the forest.

19 O rājā!
After wounding Drupada
With nine arrows,
Vṛṣasena fired another volley
Of seventy;
Followed by three more.

20 Mahārāja!
As he released those
Streams of arrows,
Karṇa's son Vṛṣasena
Looked like a rain-cloud
Pouring torrential showers.

21 Infuriated Drupada
Splintered the bow
Of Vṛṣasena
With a stone-sharpened
Broad-headed
*Bhalla*-arrow

22 But Vṛṣasena readied
A new adamantine bow
And selected
From his quiver
A glittering sharp
*Bhalla*-shaft;

23 Nocking it,
With expert aim
He targeted
Drupada;
Pulling it ear-taut,
He fired it,
To the dismay and terror
Of the Somakas.

24 Piercing Drupada's chest
Near his heart,
The arrow plunged
Into the ground.
Wounded by Vṛṣasena,
Drupada lost consciousness.

25 O Indra-among rājās!
Obeying the dictates
Of his duty,
Drupada's charioteer
Drove him away to safety.
With the defeat
Of the mahā-chariot-hero
Of the Pāñcālas,

26 The entire army
Of Drupada,
Their coats of mail
Shredded by arrows,
Panicked and fled
On that fearful night.

27 But the light
From the lamps and torches
Discarded by the warriors
Illuminated the field
Which looked
Like a cloudless sky
Replete with stars and planets.

28 Mahārāja!
With *aṅgada* arm-bracelets
Scattered everywhere,
The battlefield looked
Like a huge cloud-mass
Lit with lightning flashes
In the monsoon.

29 Terrified by the assault
Of Karṇa's son Vṛṣasena,
The agitated Somakas fled
Like the Dānavas in the war
Indra fought with them to rescue
Bṛhaspati's wife Tārakā.

30 Mahārāja!
Humiliated by Vṛṣasena,
The Somaka warriors
Even as they fled
Were a splendid spectacle
In the dazzling glare
Of the lamps.

31 O Bharata!
Karṇa's son Vṛṣasena
After defeating his foes
Looked like the
Blazing-rayed sun
At high noon.

32 He was the sole one,
Vṛṣasena, who blazed
With such resplendence
On the battlefield
Crowded with rājās
From your ranks and
The ranks of your enemies.

33 Routing the Somaka
Mahā-chariot-heroes
On the battlefield,
Vṛṣasena drove swiftly
To where rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
Had stationed himself.

34 In another part
Of the battlefield,
Prativindhya was engaged
In slaughtering his foes,
With your maha-
Chariot-hero son Duḥśāsana
Making every effort
To contain him.

35 O rājā!
When these two clashed,
It was as marvellous
As the meeting
Of Budha the planet Mercury
And Bhāskara the Sun.

36 In that clash,
Difficult-deed-doer
Prativindhya
Was wounded in the forehead
By three arrows
Released by Duḥśāsana.

37 Your powerful son,
The brilliant bowman
Duḥśāsana
So pierced Pritivindhya
With those arrows
That he looked like
A three-peaked mountain.

38 The mahā-chariot-hero
Pritivindhya retaliated
With nine arrows
That wounded Duḥśāsana;
Then, he released
Another volley
Of seven arrows.

39 O Bhārata!
A very difficult feat
Was displayed
On the battlefield
By your son Duḥśāsana.
With fearful arrows
He killed Prativindhya's horses.

40 O rājā!
With a *bhalla*-arrow
He simultaneously
Killed the charioteer,
Shredded the war-flag,
And wrecked the chariot
Into small fragments.

41 Infuriated, O *prabhu*-lord,
With knotted arrows
He ripped the pennants,
The quivers, the harness
And *yoktra*-ropes
Of Prativindhya's chariot.

42 Chariot-less
He stood
On the field,
Prativindhya,
Still shooting
Hundreds of arrows
At your son
From his firmly-held bow.

43 With great skill
Your son sliced his bow
With a razor-arrow,
And wounded him
Grievously
With ten more arrows.

44 Seeing his plight,
His mahā-chariot-hero
Brothers rushed
To his rescue
At the head
Of a vast contingent.

45 Mahārāja!
He quickly climbed
Into the chariot
Of Sutasoma,
Nocked a new bow
And wounded your son
With an arrow.

46 Seeing this,
All the warriors
Entrusted to protect
Your son
Surrounded him
And prepared for battle
With their huge army.

47 That dreadful night
A battle took place
Between their army
And yours
That swelled the population
Of Yama's kingdom.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-NINE

1 Greatly incensed,
Subala's son Śakuni
(continued Sañjaya)
Challenged Nakula
Who was slaughtering your warriors,
Shouting, "Wait! Wait!"

2 Bitter enemies these two heroes,
Each eager to kill the other,
Showered each other
With arrows fired from bows
Stretched ear-taut.

3 O rājā!
Subala's son Śakuni
Matched every war-skill
Of Nakula
In the shooting
Of arrows.

4 Maharaja!
With arrows sticking
On their bodies like thorms,
They looked
Like two porcupines
With bristling quills.

5 Their armours punctured with
Gold-feathered, sharp arrows,
Their bodies dripping blood,
They looked as magnificent as

6 As two lovely *kalpa-vṛkṣa*
Wish-fulfilling celestial trees,
Or two *kiṁśuka* flames-of-the-forest
Ablaze with blossoms.

7 Mahārāja!
With arrows sticking
On their bodies like thorns,
They looked
Like two lovely *śālmalī*
Silk-cotton trees.

8 O rājā!
Glaring at each other
With eyes
Red with wrath,
They seemed to be
Consuming each other.

9 Anger-driven,
Your brother-in-law Śakuni
Smiled and wounded Mādri's son
Nakula with a *karṇi*-arrow.

10 Struck in the chest by your
Brilliant bowman brother-in-law,
Nakula collapsed in a swoon
In the back of his chariot.

11 O rājā!
Seeing his proud
And bitter enemy
In that plight,
Śakuni roared his delight
Like a rain-heavy cloud.

12 But Pāṇḍu's son
Nakula recovered,
And rushed furiously
At Subala's son Śakuni
With mouth wide-open
Like Antaka
The god of doom.

13 O bull-brave Bharata!
Flaming with anger,
He wounded Śakuni
With sixty arrows,
Followed by a hundred
*Nārāca*-arrows
Aimed at his chest.

14 Slicing Śakuni's bow
At the spot gripped
For arrow-release,
Nakula sundered
His flagstaff which toppled
On the ground.

15 Pāṇḍu's son Nakula
Wounded him next
In the thigh
With a sharp,
Keenly polished arrow

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16 And made Śakuni
Tumble
Like a hunter
Swinging down
A flying hawk.
Mahārāja!
Gravely wounded,
He swayed
In the back of his chariot,

17 Clutching the flagstaff,
Like a *kāmuka*-lover
Clasping a *kāminī*-beloved.
O defectless one!
Seeing your brother-in-law
Śakuni delirious,

18 His charioteer drove him away
From the battlefront.
Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons
And their followers
Roared in triumph.

19 Haring defeated his foe,
Foe-exterminating Nakula angrily
Ordered his charioteer:
"Drive me to Droṇa."

20 O rājā!
Obeying the command
Of Mādri's son Nakula,
His charioteer drove him swiftly
To where Droṇa was.

21 O universal lord!
Śaradvat's son Kṛpa
Rushed at great speed
To block Śikhaṇḍin
Who was advancing
To fight Droṇa.

22 Seeing the foe-crushing
Śikhaṇḍin advancing,
The Gautama-descendant
Droṇa-protector Kṛpa
Smiled,
And fired nine *bhalla*-
Arrows at him.

23 Mahārāja!
Dedicated to the welfare
Of your sons,
Ācārya Kṛpa frustrated
Śikhaṇḍin with five arrows,
And wounded him
With twenty more.

24 The clash
That took place
Between the two
Was as bloodthirsty
As the battle
Between Śambara
And Amararāja-Indra
The god of the immortals
In the struggle between
The gods and the anti-gods.

25 The difficult-to-defeat
Mahā-chariot-heroes
Shrouded the sky
With arrow-nets
Like dark rain-clouds.

26 O finest of the Bharatas!
The already dreadful night
Became even more dreadful.
To the warriors on the field –
Resplendent warriors – that night

27 Was like Kāla-rātri,
The night of the final flare-up
Of Cosmic Time –
A night of utter horror.
Mahārāja!
Śikhaṇḍin sliced
The Gautama-descendant's
Massive bow

28 And bow-string
With a half-moon arrow.
O rājā!
Kṛpa, enraged,
Retaliated with
A dreadful *śakti*-spear,

29 Gold-handled,
Needle-sharp,
Professionally hand-smoothed,
Which Śikhaṇḍin cut down
In mid-flight
As it sped towards him.

30 That dazzling *śakti*-spear
Thudded
On the ground.
Finest of chariot-heroes,
Gautama's son Kṛpa
Readied another bow,

31 Mahārāja,
And shrouded Śikhaṇḍin
With a deluge of arrows.
Overcast by those arrows of
The renowned son
Of Gautama,
Kṛpa,

32 The excellent chariot-hero
Śikhaṇḍin
Took cover
In the back of his chariot.
Seeing him cowering
In the encounter,
Śaradvat's son Kṛpa,

33 Bent on killing him,
Attacked him,
O Bharata,
With a fresh volley of arrows.
Seeing the mahā-chariot-hero
Yajña-born son of Drupada,
Śikhaṇḍin
On the brink of defeat,

34 The Pāñcālas
And the Somakas
Came to his rescue
By encircling him.
Your sons also
Encircled the excellent
Twice-born hero Kṛpa

35 With a mammoth army.
And the battle began!
O rājā!
Chariot-heroes clashed
With chariot-heroes,

36 And the battleground
Reverberated with noise
Like thunderous clouds
As horse-riders
And elephant-riders
Attacked each other,
O lord of the world!

37 A fierce,
A horrendous clash,
O rājā,
With foot-soldiers
Sprinting
All over the field,

38 And the earth
Trembling under their feet,
O mahārāja,
Like a frightened girl.
Climbing into their chariots,
The chariot-heroes
Rushed against their foes

39 Like flocks of crows
Swooping
On *śalabha*-grasshoppers.
Their temples streaming
With rutting juice,
Mahā-elephants,

40 O Bharata,
Attacked other elephants
To make them captive.
Horsemen pitted
Against horsemen,
Foot-soldiers pitted
Against foot-soldiers

41 On that battlefield –
Each aiming
To destroy the other
And move on . . .
Attacking
Retreating
Regrouping –

42 Horrendous was the clamour
And confusion of the armies
That night. The lamps in chariots,
The lamps on the backs
Of horses and elephants,

43 O mahārāja,
Looked like
Mahā-meteors
Flaming down
From the sky.
O excellent Bharata!
The night,
Illuminated by
Those lamps and torches,

44 Shone like the day,
O rājā,
Brightening the battlefield.
Like the sun
Scattering the darkness
Of the earth,

45 The lamps and torches
Dispelled
The pitch-dark night
Of the battlefied.
The sky
The earth
The major directions
And the minor directions –

46 Obscured by dust
And darkness –
Glowed again
In the light of the lamps
And torches.
The glitter of weapons,
Armours and gems
Of the mahā-ātmaned
Warriors on both sides
On the battlefield
That pitch-dark night,
O rājā,

47 Faded
In the bright aura
Shed by the lamps
And torches.
O descendant of Bharata!
The cacophonous
And chaotic battle
Continued,

48 With no combatant
Able to make out
Who was fighting who.
O excelling Bharata!
In that clash,
Father slew son,

49 Son slew father,
Loved-and-loving *sakhā*
Killed loved-and-loving *sakhā*,
Maternal uncles and sisters' sons
Indulged in mutual slaughter –
Such was the mad medley.

50 Warriors of one army
Butchered their fellow-warriors,
And enemies killed
Their counterpart companions.
Dignity was lost
In that crazed clash
That struck terror
In the hearts of cowards.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY



1 Mahārāja! (continued Sañjaya)
At the height of that battle
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Attacked Droṇa.

2 Repeatedly twanging
His incomparable bow,
He rushed
At the gold-ornamented chariot
Of Droṇa.

3 Mahārāja!
Seeing Dhṛṣṭadyumna advancing
To kill Droṇa,
The Pāñcālas and the Pāṇḍavas
Formed a ring
Round him.

4 Seeing Dhṛṣṭadyumna
In that protective strategy,
Your sons devised
Their own defensive ring
Round ācārya Droṇa.

5 On that dark
And dreadful night,
The two armies
With their teeming soldiers
Clashed,
Like two huge
Storm-tormented seas
Teeming with agitated multitudes
Of fish and other sea-creatures.

6 Mahārāja!
That was when
The Pāñcāla prince
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Lacerated Droṇa's chest
With five arrows,
And screamed his leonine war-cry.

7 O Bharata!
Droṇa retaliated
By wounding Dhṛṣṭadyumna
With twenty-five arrows,
And slicing
His mahā-twanging bow
With a *bhalla*-arrow.

8 O bull-brave Bharata!
Wounded by Droṇa,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna bit
His lips in anger
And flung aside
His shattered bow.

9 Mahārāja!
Roused to fury,
Renowned Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Brandished
Another magnificent bow,
Determined to kill Droṇa.

10 Pulling ear-taut
The string
Of that splendid bow,
Foe-exterminating Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Fired a fearful arrow
With the sole aim
Of killing Droṇa.

11 In that mahā-clash,
That fearful arrow
Released by heroic Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Flew over the heads
Of the warriors,
Bathing the field with light
Like the rising sun.

12 O rājā!
Seeing that flaming arrow,
Gods
Gandharvas
And humans
Exclaimed:
"*Svasti-astu*!
May good luck
Be with Droṇa!"

13 As the arrow
Sped towards the chariot
Of ācārya Droṇa,
Karṇa dexterously
Sliced it into
Twelve fragments.

14 O rājā! Splintered
By the brilliant bowman
Son-of-a-charioteer Karṇa,
The arrow flopped on the ground
Like an un-fanged snake.

15 Karṇa attacked Dhṛṣṭadyumna
With ten arrows,
Aśvatthāman attacked him
With five arrows,
And Droṇa attacked Dhṛṣṭadyumna
With seven arrows.

16 Śalya did so with ten,
Duḥśāsana with three,
Duryodhana with twenty,
And Śakuni with five.

17 All the mahā-chariot-heroes
Of your army wounded
The Pāñcāla Dhṛṣṭadyumna.
Though injured in that mahā-clash
By the seven heroes
Deputed to defend Droṇa,

18 Unperplexed Dhṛṣṭadyumna repulsed
Them with three arrows each,
And wounded Droṇa, Aśvatthāman,
Karṇa and Duryodhana as well.

19 Though harassed
By the arrows
Of the brilliant bowman
Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
They rallied –
All the chariot-heroes –
Counter-attacking him
With five arrows each.

20 O rājā!
Infuriated Drumasena
Wounded Dhṛṣṭadyumna
With a single arrow.
Shooting three more arrows,
He shouted:
"Wait! Don't move!"

21 With three gold-feathered
Stone-sharpened
Sharp life-endangering arrows
Dhṛṣṭadyumna retaliated,
Wounding Drumasena.

22 With a *bhalla*-arrow
That heroic warrior
Severed the golden-
Ear-ringed dazzling
Head of Drumasena.

23 Teeth biting hard
On lips,
The head rolled
And thudded on the ground
Like a ripe palmyra-fruit.
Hurled by a mahā-storm.

24 Heroic Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Continued to attack
His foes with sharp arrows
And splintered versatile Karṇa's
Bow with *bhalla*-arrows.

25 No mahā-lion can tolerate
The severing of its tail.
Karṇa refused to tolerate
The slicing of his bow.

26 His eyes turned red
With anger.
He breathed heavily.
He readied another bow.
He pulled it taut.
He ran towards
Mahā-powerful Dhṛṣṭadyumna.
He drowned Dhṛṣṭadyumna
With arrows.

27 With Karṇa
Flaming with anger;
The six bull-brave heroes –
Duryodhana
Duḥśāsana
Droṇa
Karṇa
Śalya
Śakuni –
Surrounded the Pāñcāla Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Determined to kill him.

28 Targeted by six
Of the finest warriors,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna was considered
As already
In the mouth of death
By all your soldiers.

29 Just then
The Dāśārha descendant
Sātyaki
Raining arrows around him
Arrived to reinforce
Illustrious Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

30 Rādhā's son
Karṇa saw
The difficult-to-defeat
Brilliant bowman
Sātyaki advancing
And blocked him
With ten sharp
Straight-flying arrows.

31 Mahārāja!
Sātyaki retaliated
By wounding Karṇa
With ten arrows
And shouted to him
In front of the warriors:
"Stop! Don't run away!"

32 O rājā!
The clash between powerful
Sātyaki and Karṇa
The mahā-ātmaned hero
Was like the clash
Between Vāsava-Indra and Bali.

33 The bull-brave Kṣatriya
Sātyaki,
The rattle of whose chariot-wheels
Terrified Kṣatriyas,
Seriously wounded
Lotus-eyed Karṇa.

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34 Mahārāja!
The powerful
Son of a charioteer
Karṇa
Made the earth shudder
With the twang of his bow
And battled with Sātyaki.

35 He wounded
Śini's grandson Sātyaki
With large *vipāṭha*-arrows
Ear-shaped *karṇi*-arrows
Sharp *nārāca*-arrows
Calf-toothed *vatsadanta*-arrows
Razor-keen *kṣura*-arrows
And hundreds of others.

36 The magnificent Vṛṣṇi
Hero Sātyaki retaliated
With his own arrow-showers.
It was a well-matched
Clash of heroes.

37 Mahārāja!
Your other warriors,
And Karṇa's son
Armour-clad Vṛṣasena,
Launched a concerted
Arrow-shower on Sātyaki.

38 O radiant lord!
Infuriated Sātyaki
Repulsed the weapons
Of those warriors
With his own weapons,
And wounded Vṛṣasena
In the chest.

39 O lord of the earth!
Wounded in his chest
By Sātyaki's arrow,
Heroic Vṛṣasena
Dropped his bow,
And slumped unconscious
In his chariot.

40 Thinking his mahā
Chariot-hero son Vṛṣasena
Had perished,
Stricken-with-son-loss-grief
Karṇa
Began victimising Sātyaki.

41 Harassed by the attack
Of Karṇa,
The mahā-chariot-hero
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
Nonetheless succeeded
In repeatedly
Pinning down Karṇa
With countless arrows.

42 Wounding Karṇa with ten
And Vṛṣasena with five arrows,
Sātyaki of the Sātvatas
Sliced the bows
And finger-protectors
Of both father and son.

43 Both picked up
And readied fresh
Foe-frightening bows
And started attacking
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
Again.

44 O rājā!
Even as that fierce
Hero-exterminating clash
Progressed,
The mahā-fearful twang
Of the Gāṇḍīva-bow
Reverberated
In the battlefield.

45 O rājā!
Hearing the rattle
Of Arjuna's chariot
And the twang of his Gāṇḍīva,
Duryodhana was addressed
By the charioteer's son Karṇa:

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46 “Having slaughtered
My army
And decimated
Countless bull-brave leaders
Of the Kauravas
With his mahā-bow

47 The Gāṇḍīva,
Pārtha-Arjuna
Is announcing his victory
By twanging his bow.
I can hear
The thunderous rattle
Of the chariot
Of Indra’s son,
Vāsavasi-Arjuna.

48 Clearly the Pāṇḍava
Is displaying his mettle.
O rājā!
The army of the Bharatas
Is slowly getting wiped out.

49 Many of our soldiers
Have panicked
And fled the field.
They are scattering
Like cloud-masses
Dispersed by a storm.

50 The ambidexterous hero
Savyasāci-Arjuna
Is shattering them
Like a raft on an ocean.
Pierced by the arrows
Of the Gāṇḍīva,
The warriors are fleeing,

51 Hundreds upon hundreds
Of our best chiefs,
O rājā!
They scream in agony.
Listen
To the *dundubhi*-drums
Near Arjuna’s chariot,

52 Roaring like clouds
In the night-sky,
O lion-among-rājās!
Listen to the noisy
Wails : 'Hai! Hai!'
And the lion-cries
Of victory.

53 Listen to all these sounds
Near the chariot
Of Arjuna.
And here is
The Sātvata Sātyaki
In our very midst.

54 If we can make him
The target of our arrows,
Victory can still be ours!
And the son of the
Pāñcāla-rājā, Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Who is confronting
Droṇa,

55 He is surrounded
By the very finest
Of our chariot-heroes.
If we can kill
Sātyaki
And Pṛsata's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna,

56 O mahārāja,
Victory can still be ours.
I am convinced of this.
These two maha-
Chariot-heroes – resembling
Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu –

57 I mean the Vṛṣṇi Sātyaki
And the Pṛsata Dhṛṣṭadyumna –
Let us concentrate
On killing them.
I can see ambidexterous
Savyasāci-Arjuna,
O Bharata,
Advancing towards Droṇa,

58 Because he knows
That our finest
Bull-brave Kaurava heroes
Are attacking Sātyaki.
Order a force of
These excellent chariot-heroes

59 To intercept Pārtha-Arjuna.
He must not know
Sātyaki is imperilled
By so many of our heroes.
You can carry on
Swiftly shooting your arrows
At Sātyaki.

60 Mahārāja!
Sātyaki of the Mādhavas
Must be despatched
To the other world.
Every effort must be made
To do this.
Find the best way."

61 O rājā!
Respecting the counsel
Of Karṇa,
Your son Duryodhana
Advised Subala's son Śakuni
Like Indra
On the field of battle
Advising Viṣṇu:

62 "Take ten thousand
Never-retreating elephants
And an equal number
Of never-retreating chariot-heroes,
And march against
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

63 Duḥśāsana
Durviṣaha
Subāhu
Duspradharṣaṇa –
These with countless foot-
Soldiers will support you.

64 O *mātula*!
My mahā-muscled
Maternal uncle!
Kill Krishna-and-Arjuna
Kill Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
Nakula-and-Sahadeva
And Bhīmasena.

65 O *mātula*!
The hopes of the gods
Rest in Devendra-Indra
The king of the gods.
My hopes rest in you.
Kill the sons of Kuntī
Like Agni's son Pāvaki-Skanda
Killing the anti-gods."

66 O radiant one!
Ordered by your son Duryodhana,
Subala's son Śakuni marched
At the head of a huge army
To fight Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons.

67 To please your son,
He advanced to kill
The sons of Pāṇḍu.
What followed
Was a gory clash
Between your warriors
And their foes.

68 O rājā!
Subala's son Śakuni
Proceeded
Against the Pāṇḍavas;
In the meantime,
With a massive army,
The charioteer's son Karṇa
Attacked Sātvata-Sātyaki

69 With hundreds of arrows,
Wasting no time.
Seizing this chance,
Your earth-lords
Encircled Sātyaki.

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70 O Bharata!
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa
Attacked the chariot
Of Dhṛṣṭadyumna.
That night
A mahā-gruesome
Awesome and wonderful
Clash took place
Between the Pāñcālas
Led by Dhṛṣṭadyumna
And Droṇa.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-ONE

1 All your difficult -
To-defeat warriors
(continued Sañjaya),
With blazing anger
And ferocity attacked
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki's chariot.

2 O rājā!
They encircled him completely
With gold-and-silver-decorated chariots,
With horses
And elephants.

3 Hemming in Sātyaki
With this strategy,
The mahā-chariot-heroes
Screamed their lion-war-cries
And challenged him
To face their might.

4 The mahā-heroic warriors
In their desire to kill
The truly illustrious Sātyaki
Showered the descendant
Of the Mādhavas
With a shower of sharp arrows.

5 Seeing the heroes attacking,
The mahā-muscled, foe-slaying
Grandson of Śini, Satyaki,
Fired sharp arrows in defence.

6 With depressed-knot arrows
The difficult-to-defeat
Brilliant bowman Sātyaki
Began decapitating his foes.

7 With razor-sharp arrows
The Mādhava hero Sātyaki
Severed
The trunks of elephants
The necks of horses
And the weapon-brandishing
Arms of warriors.

8 *Prabhu*-lord!
O Bharata descendant!
Scattered
With shredded yak-tails
And white umbrellas
The battlefield looked
Like a star-sprinkled sky.

9 While the massacre
By Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki continued,
O Bharata,
A horrendous lamentation
Was heard, like the wailing
Of *preta*-spirits.

10 The weird wailing
Filled the earth.
The already fearful night
Became more fearful
And more hideous.

11 Seeing the army decimated
By the arrows
Of Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
And hearing the grisly
Horripilating lamentation
In the darkness of night,

12 O rājā,
Your finest-of-chariot-heroes
Son Duryodhana
Repeatedly ordered his charioteer:
"Drive me to the place of the noise."

13 Acting on his order,
The charioteer guided
The splendid horses
To face Sātyaki's chariot.

14 The formidable bowman
The indefatigable victor
The versatile warrior
The well-versed-in-weapons
Infuriated Duryodhana
Launched his attack
On Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki.

15 The Madhu-descendant
Sātyaki retaliated
By pulling his bow ear-taut
And wounding Duryodhana
With twelve
Blood-sucking arrows.

16 Exactly
As Śini's grandson Sātyaki
Had wounded Duryodhana,
Duryodhana retaliated
By angrily
Lacerating Sātyaki
With ten arrows.

17 O bull-brave Bharata!
A fierce battle
Raged
Between your Bharata warriors
And the Pāñcālas.

18 O descendant of Bharata!
Profoundly enraged,
Śini's grandson Sātyaki
Targeted the chest of
Your mahā-chariot-hero son
With eighty arrows.

19 With his arrows
He despatched Duryodhana's horses
To the realm of Yama,
And toppled the charioteer
With a well-aimed shaft.

20 O lord of the world!
Standing in that horseless chariot
Your son rained sharp arrows
On Sātyaki's chariot.

21 O rājā!
With consummate skill
Śini's grandson Sātyaki
Deflected and sliced
The fifty arrows
Fired by your son.

22 With *bhalla*-arrows
The Mādhava Sātyaki
Sliced the mahā-bow
Of your son Duryodhana
At the place where
His hand was gripping it.

23 Lord-of-all-worlds Duryodhana
Chariot-less and bow-less
Leapt into the dazzling chariot
Of Kṛtavarman.

24 O lord of the world!
With Duryodhana retreating,
Śini's grandson started decimating
Your army that night.

25 In the meantime,
O rājā,
Śakuni surrounded Arjuna
With a thousand elephants,
Hundreds of chariots,

26 Hundreds of horses,
And deluged
A multitude of weapons
On him.
All kinds of missiles
And mahā-weapons
Were employed
By the warriors;

27 The Kṣatriyas
Using those weapons
Against Arjuna
Were impelled by inexorable
And inevitable Kāla.
Routing the chariots, elephants
And horses,

28 Arjuna forced them
To withdraw.
On the battlefield
Subala's son Śakuni

29 Smiled as he pinned
Arjuna down
With sharp arrows.
With a hundred more arrows
He wrecked Arjuna's chariot.

30 O Bharata!
Arjuna retaliated
With twenty arrows,
And wounded other
Brilliant bowmen
With three arrows each.

31 O rājā!
Neutralising the arrows
Of his foes, Arjuna killed them
Like thunder-wielding Indra
Destroying the anti-gods.

32 O protector of the earth!
Strewn with chopped-off arms
Resembling elephant trunks,
The battlefield
Looked like a land-mass
Filled with five-headed snakes.

33 Diadem-decked heads
With handsome noses
And glittering ear-rings . . .
Angrily biting their lips . . .
Vacant-staring eyes . . .

34 Sporting neck-chains
And *cūdāmaṇi* head-gems . . .
Mouths that once
Spoke sweet words . . .
These Kṣatriya heads
Lay scattered on the field
Making it look as lovely
As a stretch of land
Carpeted with lotus blossoms.

35 The fierce fighter
Heinous-deed-doer
Bībhatsu-Arjuna
Performed that wondrous feat
And with five more arrows
He wounded Śakuni.

36 With another volley of three
He wounded Ulūka.
Though wounded, Ulūka
Attacked Vāsudeva-Krishna

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37 And filled the earth
With his mahā-roars.
Arjuna sliced the bow
Of Śakuni with his arrows
On the battlefield

38 And despatched his four horses
To the realm of Yama.
O bull-brave Bharata!
Leaping from his chariot,
Subala's son Śakuni

39 Found safety,
O lord of the world,
In Ulūka's chariot.
The two father-and-son
Mahā-chariot-heroes,
Riding the same chariot,

40 Poured a stream of arrows
On Pārtha-Arjuna,
Like two cloud-massess
Drenching a mountain
With torrential rain.
Wounding them both
With sharp arrows,
O mahārāja,
Pāṇḍava-Arjuna

41 Decimated your fleeing warriors
With hundreds of arrows.
Like clusters of cloud
Scattered
By a furious wind,

42 Your warriors, O rājā,
O ruler of the world,
Were routed by Arjuna.
O finest of the Bharatas!
Savaged that night,
Your army.

43 Broke ranks and fled
In fear helter-skelter
In all directions.
Some abandoned their
Vehicles and mounts
And scattered,

44 Panic-stricken, urged
By their fellow-warriors.
Some ran around
In confused circles
That pitch-dark night.
O bull-brave Bharata!
Having defeated
Your warriors in battle,

45 Vāsudeva-Krishna
And Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Blew joyfully
On their conches.
In the meantime,
O mahārāja,
Wounding Droṇa
With three arrows,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna

46 Sliced Droṇa's bow-string
With a sharp arrow:
Crusher-of-Kṣatriyas Droṇa
Flung his bow
On the ground

47 And readied another bow
Of adamantine strength
And swift speed.
Wounding Dhṛṣṭadyumna
With seven arrows,
Droṇa

48 Lacerated the charioteer
Of Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
O rājā,
With five arrows.
Pinning down Droṇa
With his arrows,
The mahā-chariot-hero
Dhṛṣṭadyumna

49 Created havoc in
The ranks of the Kauravas,
Like Maghavat-Indra
The bountiful deity
Routing the anti-gods.
O respected one!
Your son's army decimated,

50 A fearful river of blood
Began flowing on the field
Between the two armies,
Carrying with it men
And horses and elephants,

51 Like the Vaitaraṇī river
That flows between
The earth and lower regions,
Transporting the spirits
Of the dead to the city
Of Yama-rāja.
Annihilating the army,
Illustrious Dhṛṣṭadyumna

52 Dazzled with the glory
Of Śakra-Indra
Surrounded by the gods.
Both Dhṛṣṭadyumna
And Śikhaṇḍin
Blew their conches,

53 As did the twins
Nakula and Sahadeva,
And Pāṇḍu's son
Wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma.
Routing the thousands
Of mahā-chariot-heroes,

54 The Pāṇḍavas,
Flushed with victory,
Roared their lion-cries
Before the very eyes
Of your son Duryodhana
And Karṇa and Droṇa
And Droṇa's valiant son
Aśvatthāman,
O mighty ruler *Viśāmpati*!

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-TWO

1 *Viśāmpati*! (continued Sañjaya),
Seeing his army exterminated
By the mahā-ātmaned Pāṇḍavas,
Your son Duryodhana was wild with rage.

2 Quickly he went to Karṇa
And Droṇa, the victory-winning warriors.
Flaming with anger,
Skilled-in-speech Duryodhana said:

3 "You saw ambidexterous
Savyāsacī-Arjuna
Kill the Sindhu-ruler
Jayadratha on the field;
So infuriated were you
That you decided
To continue the battle.

4 Right now my army
Is being savaged
By the Pāṇḍavas.
You see this.
You have the śakti
To stop them and defeat them,
But it seems that
Your śakti is powerless.

5 O bestowers of honour!
If you fail me now,
You should not have
Given word then:
'We will defeat Pāṇḍu's sons.'

6 I believed you,
And I went ahead.
I could as easily
Have decided not to fight
The sons of Pṛthā-Kuntī,
And so saved the lives
Of all our warriors.

7 O bull-brave heroes!
O valiant warriors!
You who are praised for prowess!
If you feel
I do not deserve
To be deserted,
Fight for me,
Fight with all your might!"

8 Spurred to action
By your son's words,
The two heroes,
Like two prodded snakes,
Marched into battle.

9 The finest chariot-heroes,
The most brilliant bowmen
In the three worlds –
They advanced against
Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons
And Śini's grandson Sātyaki
And others.

10 Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons too
With their allies
Prepared themselves
For the clash
With those two heroes
Who repeatedly roared
Their war-cries.

11 The well-versed-in-weapons
Brilliant bowman
Enraged Droṇa
Fired ten sharp arrows
On the bull-brave
Śini-descendant Sātyaki.

12 Karṇa wounded him
With ten more arrows,
Your son Duryodhana
With seven,
Vṛṣasena with ten,
And Subala's son Śakuni
With seven.

13 Śini's grandson Sātyaki
Was deluged with arrows
Shot from all sides
By these Kauravas.
Seeing Droṇa engaged
In systematically enfeebling
The Pāṇḍavas,

14 The Somakas showered
A torrent of arrows,
Wounding him.
O lord of the world!
Droṇa sucked the life-breaths
Out of the Kṣatriyas –

15 Like the rays of the sun
Scattering darkness,
O rājā!
O lord of the world!
While Droṇa was routing
The Pāñcālas,

16 They shrieked in agony –
A chilling wail!
A wail that reverberated
On the battlefield.
Deserting sons and fathers
And brothers
And maternal uncles,

17 Deserting nephews
And friends
And relatives –
They fled,
Each warrior bent
On saving himself
As best he could.

18 Others, bewildered,
Fled straight
To Droṇa himself.
Countless Pāṇḍava warriors
Were speedily despatched
To the other world.

Transcreated by P. Lal

19 Hounded by the mahā-
Ātmaned Droṇa,
O rājā,
The Pāṇḍava warriors fled
In the dark night,
Throwing away hundreds of
Their flaming torches,

20 In the presence of
Bhīma
Vijaya-Arjuna
Acyuta-Krishna
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
And Pṛṣata's son
Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

21 Impossible to tell
In that thick darkness
Who was fleeing where.
Only the light
From the flaming torches
In the Kaurava ranks
Helped to identify
The panic-stricken foes.

22 O rājā!
The mahā-chariot-heroes
Droṇa and Karṇa
Pursued the fleeing warriors
Of the Pāṇḍavas,
Showering arrows at them
From behind.

23 Seeing the Pāñcālas
Routed and fleeing,
Janārdana-Krishna,
Depressed,
Said to Phālguna-Arjuna:

24 "These brilliant bowmen
Droṇa and Karṇa –
They have joined hands
And nearly defeated
Pṛṣata's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna
And Sātyaki
And the Pāñcālas
With countless arrows.

25 Son of Kuntī!
The arrow-showers
Of these two heroes
Have shattered the might
Of our mahā-chariot-heroes.
Even if we try,
We cannot stop the rout."

26 Seeing them fleeing,
Keśava-Krishna and Arjuna
Shouted: "O Pāṇḍavas!
Do not fear!
Do not flee!

27 We are here –
Both of us!
We are well-armed!
Our allies are here
To support us!
In perfect formation
We will attack
Droṇa
And the charioteer's son
Karṇa.

28 These two –
Droṇa and Karṇa –
They are brave
They are strong
They are heroes
They fight to win.
If you do not face them
Tonight,
You will all
Be exterminated."

29 While the two
Were trying to rally
Their panicking warriors,
The mahā-powerful
Fearful-deed-doer
Wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma
Arrived there
With his army.

30 Seeing Vṛkodara-Bhīma
With his army,
Janārdana-Krishna tried
To revive the spirit
Of Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna,
Saying:

31 "Look at war-eager Bhīma
With the Somakas
And Pāṇḍavas supporting him
Rushing against
The two mahā-warriors
Droṇa and Karṇa!

32 Son of Pāṇḍu!
With their help
And with the help
Of the Pāñcāla
Mahā-chariot-heroes,
March into battle –
And restore the morale
Of your army."

33 The two lions-among-men,
Mādhava-Krishna
And Pāṇḍava Arjuna,
Took up battle positions
Facing Droṇa and Karṇa.

34 The mahā-army
Of Yudhiṣṭhira
(continued Sañjaya)
Rallied and returned.
Droṇa and Karṇa
Continued their fierce assault
On their foes.

35 O rājā!
A fearful spectacle!
Two massive armies
Clashing that night
Like two huge oceans
Swelling
At moon-rise.

36 Flinging aside
Their flaming torches,
Your warriors
Fought like madmen
With the Pāṇḍavas.

37 In that dust-
And-darkness-dimmed
Field of battle,
The warriors
Fought each other,
Guessing who was who
By calling out
Names and *gotras*.

38 Mahārāja!
It was like
A svayaṁvara
Where contending
Earth-lord candidates
Challenge each other
By name
For the hand of the bride.

39 Sometimes,
Complete silence;
Then, suddenly,
A cacophony from
Enraged warriors,
Victors and vanquished.

40 O excelling Kaurava!
Wherever the torches
Blazed,
There the warriors
Rushed,
Like insects into a flame.

41 O Indra-among-rājās!
So the Kauravas
And Pāṇḍavas
Fought on
In the mahā-gloom
Of a dreadful
Deep-dead mahā-darkness.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-THREE

1 Slayer-of-heroic-foes
Karṇa (continued Sañjaya),
Spotted Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
And wounded his vital organs
With ten arrows.

2 O respected one!
With a flourish, Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Retaliated with five arrows,
Shouting:
"Stay where you are! Don't run!"

3 Standing erect
In massive chariots,
They attacked each other
Shooting arrow-showers
From bows
Stretched fully taut.

4 Karṇa's arrows
Wounded the four horses
And the charioteer
Of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
The finest of the Pāñcālas.

5 Sharp arrows sliced
Dhṛṣṭadyumna's excellent bow,
And a single *bhalla*-arrow
Toppled the charioteer.

6 His charioteer killed,
As well as his horses,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna killed
Karṇa's four horses with
A *parigha* spiked iron club.

7 With countless snake-
Venomed virulent arrows,
Karṇa foiled Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Who walked away
To Yudhiṣṭhira's camp.

8 O respected one!
There he climbed
Into Sahadeva's chariot
And prepared
To counter-attack Karṇa
But was prevented
By Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira.

9 More-than-mahā-valiant
Karṇa twanged his bow
Fiercely and blew deafeningly
On his conch.

10 Seeing Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Defeated on the field,
The enraged Pāñcāla
And Somaka mahā-chariot-heroes

11 Brandishing their weapons
Rushed in a body
At the charioteer's son Karṇa,
On a do-or-die mission
To exterminate Karṇa.

12 In the meantime,
Karṇa's charioteer
Had yoked fresh horses
To his chariot:
Noble-pedigreed
Sindhu steeds
Well-trained
Amazingly swift
Conch-white.

13 Targeting the Pāñcāla
Mahā-chariot-heroes
With unerring accuracy,
He pinned them down
Like a cloud pouring rain
On a mountain.

14 Like a doe
Fleeing from a lion,
The stricken Pāñcālas
Fled – a mahā-*camu*
Of 129 elephants,
129 chariots,
2187 horses,
3645 foot-soldiers.

15 Countless warriors
Toppled on the ground
From horses
Elephants
And chariots.

16 In that mahā-clash,
Karṇa sliced
The arms of warriors
And chopped
Their ear-ringed heads
With his razor-
Sharp arrows.

17 O respected one!
O ruler of the world!
He sliced the thighs
Of elephant-warriros
Horse-riders
And foot-soldiers.

18 As they fled in panic,
His victims
Did not realise
They had lost their limbs
Or their mounts.

19 So terrified were the
Pāñcālas and Sṛñjayas
They mistook even the
Movement of a straw
For the presence of Karṇa.

20 They mistook even their
Fleeing friends for Karṇa,
And panicked and fled
In total terror.

21 O Bharata!
Karṇa chased
The fleeing warriors,
Terrorising them further
With showers of arrows.

Transcreated by P. Lal

22 Despatched by the arrows
Of mahā-ātmaned Karṇa
Into the jaws of Kāla
The Cosmic All-Consumer,
They fled
Without so much as even
Looking at each other.

23 Savaged by the arrows
Of Karṇa and Droṇa,
The Pāñcālas fled, O rājā,
Staring blankly here and there.

24 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira witnessed
The rout of his army and,
Planning to retreat, he said
To Phālguna-Arjuna:

25 "Look at Karṇa
That brilliant bowman!
He stands there
Bow in hand –
On this dark night
He dazzles
Like the flaming sun.

26 Pṛthā-Kuntī's son!
Listen to the wails
Of your allies
Mangled by the arrows
Of Karṇa.
They scream like orphans.

27 I cannot make out
When Karṇa selects a shaft
And when he strings it.
Pṛthā-Kuntī's son!
If he continues fighting
Like this,
He will kill us all.

28 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
It is now time
For you to act.
You must do
What you must do
To kill Karṇa.
The time has come."

29 Mahārāja!
Hearing Yudhiṣṭhira
Say this, Pārtha-Arjuna
Turned to Krishna
And said:
"Kuntī's son Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
Is afraid
Of Rādhā's son Karṇa.

30 Our army is fleeing.
Plan so that
What should be done
Against Karṇa,
Is quickly done.

31 O Madhusūdana-Krishna!
Savaged by the arrows
Of Droṇa
And terrified of Karṇa,
There is no stopping
The flight of our soldiers.

32 I can see Karṇa
Lording it fearlessly
On the battlefield.
Even the fleeing chariot-
Heroes are not spared
His sharp arrows.

33 O lion-of-the-Vṛṣṇis!
No snake can suffer
The touch
Of hostile feet.
I cannot suffer
To see
The rout of my army
In this great war.

34 Madhusūdana-Krishna!
I ask you
To take me
Where the mahā-chariot-hero
Karṇa is.
Today,
Either I kill him
Or he kills me."

35 Vāsudeva-Krishna replied:
"Kuntī's son!
I can see
That lion-among-men Karṇa
Lording it on the field
Like the rājā-of-the-gods Indra
Displaying feats
Of superhuman prowess.

36 Lion-among-men Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
None can match him in battle
Except you
And the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca.

37 O defectless one!
O mahā-muscled hero!
I do not think
Now is the time
For you to confront
The Sūta's son Karṇa
On the battle-field.

38 He has a radiant
Meteor-like mahā-missile
Given to him
By Vāsava-Indra
O mahā-muscled hero!
The Sūta's son Karṇa
Will use it against you.

39 The *śakti*-missile is
A dreadful-looking weapon.
He depends on it.
Let mahā-powerful Ghaṭotkaca
Confront
Rādhā's son Karṇa.

40 He is the son
Of formidable Bhīma.
He has the valour
Of a god.
He has celestial
Rākṣasa-missiles
As well as other
Anti-god weapons.

41 He loves you
And wants your welfare.
I have not the least doubt
He will defeat Karṇa
In combat."

42 Taking this advice,
The mahā-muscled
Lotus-eyed son
Of Pṛthā-Kuntī, Arjuna
Summoned the rākṣasa
Ghaṭotkaca
Who appeared before him.

43 O ruler of the world!
Clad in armour,
He carried a bow,
Arrows and a sword.
He bowed before Krishna
And Pāṇḍu's son
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
And said, "Krishna,
I am here.
Order me."

44 The Dāśārha-descendant
Krishna smiled
And said to
The dark-cloud-skinned
Radiant ear-ringed
Son of Hiḍimbā:

45 “Ghaṭotkaca my son!
Listen to me carefully.
It’s time now for your prowess,
And no one else’s.

46 Your friends are drowning.
Be their boat in this crisis.
You have knowledge
Of so many weapons.
You possess the strength
Of rākṣasī māyā.

47 Son of Hiḍimbā!
Look at Karṇa –
He’s punishing the Pāṇḍavas
Like a herdsman bullying
A herd of cows
In the pasture
Of the battlefield.

48 Karṇa
Is a brilliant mahā-bowman.
He is intelligent.
He is unshakable
In valour.
He is determined to kill
The bull-brave Kṣatriya Pāṇḍavas.

49 The scorching fire
Of his arrows is such
That even the most
Brilliant bowman
Are incinerated
When he attacks.

50 Afflicted by the arrows
The Sūta’s son Karṇa
Is shooting this night,
The Pāṇḍavas scatter
Like a flock of deer
Chased by a lion.

51 O performer
Of fearsome feats!
On the battlefield today
Who is there but you
Who can frustrate
The irresistible advance
Of the charioteer's son
Karṇa?

52 O mahā-muscled one!
Show your mettle today.
Perform feats
Worthy of yourself
Your maternal uncles
Your father
Your valour
Your weapons
Your strength!

53 Son of Hiḍimbā!
People want sons
Because they want help
In times of trouble.
Help your friends
And relatives today.

54 Ghaṭotkaca! A father
Wants a son
For his self-interest,
To save him in this world
And in the after-world.

55 Son of Bhīma!
When you fight,
Your awesome might
Becomes more awesome,
And your māyā
Is such that none
Can overcome it.

56 O foe-scorcher!
The arrows of Karṇa
Are decimating the Pāṇḍavas
Tonight. Uprooted,
They are drowning
In the Dhṛtarāṣṭran ocean.
Ferry them across
To safety.

57 Rākṣasas are brave and mighty
And difficult-to-defeat
And performers of valiant feats.
Night gives them even
Greater invulnerability.

58 Make use
Of your māyā
And kill
The mahā-bowman Karṇa
Tonight.
Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons
And Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Will kill Droṇa."

59 O Kaurava king!
(continued Sañjaya)
Heinous-deed-doer
Bībhatsu-Arjuna
Heard the advice
Of Keśava-Krishna
And said to foe-
Crushing Ghaṭotkaca:

60 "I think you, Pāṇḍava Bhīma
And long-armed Sātyaki
Are the finest warriors
In our army.

61 So, challenge Karṇa
To a chariot-duel
Tonight.
The mahā-chariot-hero
Sātyaki will support you
At your rear.

62 Kill valiant Karṇa
With Sātyaki's help
Just as Indra killed Tāraka
In the distant past
With Skanda's help."

63 "*Prabhu*-lord!
Mahā-muscled one!
I will do as you say.
I leave, taking
Karṇa's death in my hands.

64 O Bharata! I can face
Karṇa as well as Droṇa.
I can face all the mahā-
Ātmaned Kṣatriya warriors.

65 The battle I fight
With Karṇa tonight
Will be remembered
And narrated
As long as this world
Liasts.

66 I will spare none
Tonight –
Neither the brave
Nor the cowardly
Nor those who beg for mercy.
I will kill them all.
This is the dharma
Of a rākṣasa."

67 O rājā!
Saying this,
The exterminator-of-heroes
Mahā-muscled Ghaṭotkaca
Terrorising all on the field
Rushed to confront Karṇa.

68 The lion-among-men
Charioteer's son Karṇa
Smilingly prepared himself
For the attack
Of the blazing-faced
And glossy-haired
Son of Hiḍimbā.

69 O lion-among-rājās!
The battle between
Karṇa and the rākṣasa
Who roared as they fought
Was like the battle
Between Śakra-Indra
And Prāhlada in the ancient past.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-FOUR

1 O rājā!
(continued Sañjaya),
Seeing Ghaṭotkaca
Advancing towards the chariot
Of the charioteer's son Karṇa
In order to kill him,

2 Your son Duryodhana
Said to Duḥśāsana:
"Seeing the valour
Of Karṇa in battle,
The rākṣasa

3 Has decided to attack
The mahā-chariot-hero.
Stop him! Rush
With your mahā-army
To where the mahā-powerful
Karṇa,

4 Vaikartana-Karma
Has planned to clash
With the rākṣasa.
O bestower of of honour!
Protect Karṇa,
With all your valour,
With all your warriors.

5 Let it not happen
That our carelessness
Became the cause
Of Karṇa's death."
Meantime, O rājā,
Jaṭāsura's powerful son
Alambuṣa,

6 Finest of exterminators,
Came to Duryodhana
And said to him:
"Duryodhana!
If you so desire,
The difficult-to-defeat-
In-battle

7 Pāṇḍavas and their allies –
I will be happy
To kill them.
My father was Jaṭāsura,
The rākṣasa leader.
In the past,

8 These low-minded sons
Of Pṛthā-Kuntī
Killed him, using
Devious rākṣasa-killing tactics.
I will gratify his spirit
By offering him pūjā
With the blood of his foes

9 And their flesh as well.
O Indra-among-rājās!
Order me to do this."
Extremely pleased,
Rājā Duryodhana
Repeatedly said to him:
"With Droṇa and Karṇa
On my side,
I have the power
To conquer my enemies.

10 I give you permission
To go and fight
And kill Ghaṭotkaca.
He is a cruel rākṣasa,
He is half-human
And half-rākṣasa.

11 He loves the Pāṇḍavas and destroys
Elephants and horses and chariots.
He is a sky-ranger.
Send him off to Yama's realm."

12 The massive-bodied son
Of Jaṭāsura said,
"So be it!"
And rushed to attack
Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca.
With an array
Of powerful weapons.

13 Like a tempest
Scattering cloud-clusters,
Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca
Dispersed Alambuṣa
And Karṇa
And the difficult-to-defeat
Army of the Kauravas.

14 Aware of the power
Of the māyā of Alambuṣa,
Ghaṭotkaca
Showered upon him
A vast variety
Of arrows.

15 Retaliating against
The son of Bhīma
With innumerable arrows,
Alambuṣa
Spread havoc
In the ranks of the Pāṇḍavas.

16 O Bharata!
Savaged by him,
The Pāṇḍava warriors
Fled
In the darkness
Of the night,
Like storm-scattered clouds.

17 O rājā!
Your warriors also,
Targets of the arrows
Of Ghaṭotkaca,
Flinging away
Their burning torches,
Fled for their lives.

18 Flaming with anger,
In that mahā-clash,
Alambuṣa pierced
Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca
With ten arrows,
Like an elephant-driver
Piercing an elephant
With his goad.

19 Seeing this,
Ghaṭotkaca chopped
Into small pieces
The charioteer
The horses
And the weapons
Of his opponent,
And screamed fiercely.

20 Like a rain-cloud drenching
Meru mountain, he showered
Arrows on Karṇa, Alambuṣa
And the Kaurava ranks.

21 Harassed continously
By the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca,
The ranks
Of your four-fold army
Fell upon each other
In confusion.

22 Mahārāja!
Chariot-less and
Driver-less Alambuṣa
With flaming anger
Punched Ghaṭotkaca
With his fist.

23 Ghaṭotkaca trembled and swayed
Like a mountain draped
With creepers, trees and grass
Hit by an earthquake.

24 Bhīma son Ghaṭotkaca
Angrily raised his club-thick arm –
His foe-pulverising arm –
And pummelled Jatāsura's son.

25 The pummelling by
Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca
Hurled Alambusa
To the ground; then,
Ghaṭotkaca kept striking
The supine Alambuṣa
With his two arms
Whirling like Indra's war-flags.

26 Jatāsura's son Alambuṣa
Slipped from the clutches
Of Ghaṭotkaca,
Rose, and leapt furiously
At Ghaṭotkaca.

27 Lunging swiftly,
He picked up
Giant Ghaṭotkaca,
Dashed him
On the ground,
And began kicking
Him violently.

28 The duel between
Those gigantic heroes
Ghaṭotkaca and Alambuṣa
Roaring and pummelling
Each other
Was awesome-and-gruesome –
A horripilating spectacle!

29 The mahā-valiant
Māyā-manipulating rākṣasas,
Each trying
To outwit the other,
Fought like Indra
With Virocana's son Bali.

30 One became fire,
The other, ocean;
One Garuḍa,
The other, Takṣaka;
One cloud, the other mahā-strom;
One, mahā-mountain,
The other, lightning.

31 Elephant against lion,
Sun against Rāhu,
The sun-eclipsing anti-god –
The māyā-magic continued,
Each obsessed
With slaughtering the other
In a hundred different ways.

32 What a wondrous war
Between Alambuṣa
And Ghaṭotkaca!
With *parigha* spiked iron clubs
And maces
And *prāsa* barbed darts
And *mudgara*-mallets
And three-pointed *paṭṭiśa*-spears

33 And *musala*-maces
And crests of hillocks
They assaulted each other.
On horseback and elephant-back,
In chariots and on foot,

34 The magnificent rākṣasas
Employed
Their mahā-māyā magic.
O rājā!
Driven by the desire
To kill Alambuṣa,
Ghaṭotkaca,

35 In a burst
Of violent anger,
Swooped
Like a flying hawk
On Alambuṣa.
Gripping hard
The massive-bodied
Rākṣasa Alambuṣa,

36 He raised him high
And hurled him on the ground,
As Viṣṇu did Maya.
With a wondrous-looking sword,
Ghaṭotkaca,

37 O mahārāja,
Lopped off the head
Of his horrendous foe
Which continued to roar
Even as it fell,

38 Severed from the giant
Body of an enemy
Famed for valour.
Holding by its hair
The blood-dripping head,

39 Ghaṭotkaca hurried
To the chariot
Of Duryodhana.
Approaching the chariot,
The mahā-muscled rākṣasa grinned

40 And swiftly flung
The wild-haired disfigured head
Inside the chariot,
And roared fiercely
Like a rumbling monsoon cloud.

41 O rājā!
He said
To Duryodhana:
"Here is your friend
Famed for his valour,
Killed by me.
Look at him!

42 You will see Karṇa
Killed –
And yourself killed.
Anyone who respects
His sva-dharma-artha-and-kāma –
These three –

43 Should never go empty-handed
To a rājā or a Brahmin
Or a woman. So,
I gift you this head.
You can rest easy –
Until the time
I kill Karṇa.

44 O lord of men!
Saying this
He rushed to attack
Karṇa,
Scattering hordes
Of sharp arrows
On the battlefield.

45 Mahārāja!
And so
On the battlefield commenced
The gory and gruesome and glorious clash
Between the human
And the rākṣasa.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIVE

1 “Tell me all,” said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
“About that night battle
Between the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca
And Vaikartana Karṇa.

2 What disguise
Did the dreadful rākṣasa
Assume this time?
And his chariot
And horses
And his array of weapons –
Describe them.

3 How grand were his horses,
His chariot,
His war-flag,
His bow?
And his armour
And head-gear.

4 Sañjaya, you are
An expert reporter.
Give me the details.”
Sañjaya replied:
Red-eyed giant body
Copper-complexioned
That stomach

5 Bristling body-hair
Dark-green beard and monstache
Spear-like ears
Mahā-jaws
Mouth so wide
It reached the ears
Horribly sharp teeth

6 Tongue and lips
Long and copper-coloured
Broad stabby nose
Elongated eyebrows
Black skin
Red neck
Hill-high
Gruesome-looking

7 Mahā-body mahā-arms
Mahā-head mahā-strength
Belligerent stance
Rough-skinned
Knobbly calf-muscles

8 Massive thighs,
Deep-hollowed navel,
Though mahā-huge
He looked compact,
His arms were adorned
With *aṅgada*-ornaments,
He was a master
Of mahā-māyā,

9 On his chest
Was a gold necklace
Dazzling like a fire-
Garland on a mountain,
On his head
Was a multi-faceted
Golden limb-flattering

10 Diadem
Like a glittering arch,
His earrings shone
Like the morning sun,
His golden garlands glowed,

11 He wore
A mahā-resplendent
Bronze armour,
Hundreds of twinkling
*Kiṅkiṇi*-bells graced
His red-flagged chariot –

12 A mahā-chariot
Of a *nalva*-long
Four-hundred-cubit dimension
Carpeted with bear-skin,
Decorated with pennants,
Replete with war-weapons,

13 Whose eight wheels
Roared like the rumble
Of rain-clouds.
Formidable,
Red-eyed,
Able to change form
At will,
Furious like musth elephants –

14 Were the hundred
Powerful horses
Pulling his chariot.
Victors-of-weariness,
They swiftly sped
With the heavy weight
Of the mighty rākṣasa,

15 Neighing and whinnying
And tossing
Their thick manes.
A rākṣasa
With scintillating ear-rings
And horrible eyes
Was the charioteer

16 Who held the reins
That flashed on the field
Like the rays of the sun.
It seemed that Ghaṭotkaca
Was the Sun, and his charioteer
Was Aruna the Dawn.

Transcreated by P. Lal

17 Like a mahā-mountain
Yoked to a mahā-cloud,
Were Ghaṭotkaca
And charioteer.
The flag of the chariot
Caressed the clouds
In the sky,

18 And on the flag-pole
Perched
The flag-symbol –
A dire and dreadful
Crimson
Carnivorous
Vulture.
Pulling his bowstring
And twanging it
Till the powerful bow
Reverberated with the noise
Of the thunderbolt
Of Vāsava-Indra –

19 A bowstring
One arm's-length wide
And fourteen *aratni-*
Elbow-to-finger-tips long,
He shot arrows the size
Of a chariot's
*Akṣa*-axle, shrouding
All the directions,

20 As he raced towards Karṇa
On that night of doom
Of so many heroes.
As he stood upright
In his chariot
And pulled his bowstring,

21 The twang reverberated
Like the roar
Of a thunderbolt.
O Bharata!
Terrified by the noise,
Your warriors

22 Swayed and trembled
Like the surging billows
Of an ocean.
Seeing the horrendous -
Eyed and fearful.
Formed rākṣasa
Rushing towards him,

23 Rādhā's son Karṇa
Smiled calmly
And quickly advanced
To face the attack.
From a vantage point
Very near his adversary,
Karṇa counter-attacked,

24 Like an elephant leaving a herd
To attack another,
Like a bull attacking another bull.
O lord of the world!
The dreadful clash
That took place

25 Between Karṇa
And the rākṣasa
Resembled, O rājā,
The clash between
Indra and Śambara
On the distant past.
Each brandishing
A massive and
Fearful-twanging bow,

26 They wounded each other
With arrow-showers.
With their bows
Stretched fully taut,
The two heroes,
With depressed-knot arrows,

27 Sliced each other's
Bronze armour.
Like two lions with
Claws, like two elephants
With tusks,

28 They afflicted each other
With *śakti*-spears and arrows
From their chariots.
With well-aimed arrows
They multilated each other

29 Till it hurt even
To look at them.
Wounded all over,
With blood trickling
Down their bodies,

30 They looked like
Two water-drenched
Red chalk cliffs.
Their bodies were criss-
Crossed by arrows,

31 But they fought on,
Neither flinching,
Both seeking to win.
That long night,
They played a war-game,

32 Staking their lives,
O rājā, equally matched,
Those two –
Karṇa and the rākṣasa.
The sharp arrows
That Ghaṭotkaca shot
In a seamless stream

33 Produced a twang
That terrified ally
And foe alike.
O king! Karṇa could not
Better Ghaṭotkaca,

34 So the all-weapons-expert
Hero invoked a celestial missile.
Seeing Karṇa aiming
That missile at him,

35 Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca,
Invoked his rākṣasa mahā-māyā,
Brandishing *śūla*-spears, rocks,
Trees, *mudgara*-mallets,

36 A horde of horrendous
Rākṣasa-warriors materialised
And surrounded him.
Seeing him brandishing
His gigantic bow,
The kings were alarmed,

37 For he looked like
Kāla the Doom-Dispenser
Of all creatures, armed
With his rod of judgment.
Terrified by the lion-roars
Of Ghaṭotkaca,

38 Elephants urinated
And human beings quaked.
Showers of rocks
Descended on all sides,

39 Hurled by the rākṣasa,
Whose might increases at night.
Iron wheels, *bhuśuṇḍi* fire-arms,
*Śakti*-spears, *tomara*-javelins,

40 *Śūla*-lances and *śataghni*-fire-
Missiles and *paṭṭiśa*-three-pointed spears
Poured in a steady stream.
Lord of men! Witnessing
The horror of the battle,

41 Your sons and their soldiers
Fled. Only Karṇa, unruffled,
Proud of his war-skills,
Remained on the field.

42 With his arrows he neutralised
The māyā of Ghaṭotkaca.
Infuriated at the baffling
Of his māyā, Ghaṭotkaca

43 Wounded the charioteer's son
Karṇa with fierce arrows.
Piercing Karṇa, the blood-smeared shafts

44 Slid into the earth
Like hissing snakes.
Flaming with anger, the valiant
And versatile charioteer's son

45 Overpowered Ghaṭotkaca
With ten arrows.
His vital organs injured
By the charioteer's son,

46 Ghaṭotkaca lifted a celestial
Thousand-spoked cakra-weapon,
Razor-rimmed, its studded gems
And diamonds glowing like the dawn.

47 Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca, to kill Karṇa,
Hurled the *cakra* at Adhiratha's son.
Karṇa's arrows splintered
That wildly whirling *cakra.*

48 The fragments scattered on the field
Like the hopes of an ill-fated man.
Seeing his *cakra* disintegrate,
Ghaṭotkaca, in violent anger,

49 Blotted Karṇa with arrows, like
Svarbhānu-Rāhu eclipsing the sun.
The charioteer's son, valorous like
Rudra-Śiva, Upendra-Viṣṇu or Indra,

50 Calmly riddled Ghaṭotkaca's chariot
With his feathered arrows.
Ghaṭotkaca angrily hurled
A gold-ornamented mace.

51 Which Karṇa sliced mid-flight
With his arrows, and it fell.
Leaping into inter-space, roaring
Like a doomsday Kāla-cloud,

52 The massive-bodied rākṣasa
Hurled tree-trunks from the sky.
Karṇa pierced the māyā-making
Son of Bhīma, speeding

53 In the sky, with his arrows,
Like sunrays piercing a cloud.
Fragmenting his chariot into
A hundred pieces, killing his horses,

54 Karṇa showered him with arrows
Like the rain-cloud Parjanya
Pouring torrents. Not two finger-
Widths of body remained wound-free.

55 Ghaṭotkaca resembled a porcupine
With bristling arrow-quills.
The horses and chariot
And war-flag of Ghaṭotkaca,

56 And Ghaṭotkaca himself,
Could not be seen in that volley
Of arrows. With his māyā-magic
He went on fighting Karṇa.

57 He baffled Karṇa's celestial weapons
With his own weapons.
Such was the power
Of his instantaneous māyā,

58 Arrow-nets suddenly
Began spawning in the sky.
O excelling Kaurava! Bhīma's son
With the magic of his mahā-mayā

59 Assumed an all-confounding mahā-form
And began strutting everywhere, O Bharata.
Horrendous forms
With horrifying heads appeared

60 And with mayā-magic swallowed
The celestial weapons
Of the charioteer's son Karṇa.
Then, suddenly, the mahā-frame
Of the rākṣasa, disintegrated
In hundreds of pieces,

61 Seemed to lie hopeless
And lifeless on the ground.
Thinking him to be dead,
The bull-brave Kauravas rejoiced.

62 In a flash he rose and
Started roving in all directions.
A mahā-body – hundreds of heads –
Hundreds of stomachs –

63 Mahā-arms –
A veritable Maināka mountain
Roaming at will!
Suddenly the rākṣasa
Shrivelled to the size
Of a thumb

64 And started leaping
And frisking like sea-froth.
Drilling through the earth,
He plunged again into the sea –

65 One moment here, surfacing
Another moment elsewhere.
In a golden chariot
Descending from the sky,

66 Travelling freely with the help
Of his māyā, in shining armour
And glittering earrings, he halted
Near the chariot of Karṇa.

67 Lord of the earth! Calmly
He said to the charioteer's son:
"O son of a Sūta! Wait!
Your life is in my hands!

68 Today I will wipe out
Your sraddha for war!"
Saying this, the cruelly valiant
Eyes-red-with-anger rākṣasa

69 Leapt from inter-space
And attacked Karṇa like
A lion leaping on an
Indra-among-elephants.

70 Like a cloud pelting
Torrential rain on a hill,
Ghaṭotkaca deluged
The chariot-hero Karṇa
With arrows as thick
As a chariot-axle.

71 Karṇa repulsed them all
From a safe distance.
O bull-brave Bharata!
Seeing his māyā frustrated
By Karṇa,

72 Ghaṭotkaca invoked
The māyā of invisibility
Under cover of which
He became a high-peaked
Tree-covered mountain,

73 A mahā-monolith
Spouting a ceaseless stream
Of *sūla*-lances
Prasa barbed darts
Swords
*Musala*-maces . . .
Seeing that massive
Black-coal man-mountain,
Karṇa

74 Kept clam even as
The weapons gushed
From the mountain.
He smiled, and invoked
His own celestial missile

75 Karṇa's missile pulverised
That Indra-among-mountains.
It vanished,
But the rākṣasa re-materialised
As a blue cloud complete
With Indra's-bow the rainbow

76 And started pelting
The charioteer's son Karṇa
With a volley of rocks.
The well-versed-in-war-weapons
Hero Karṇa invoked
The Vāyavya wind-missile.

77 Vaikartana-Karṇa
Annihilated the doomsday
Kāla-cloud. Obscuring
All the directions
With his arrow-showers,

78 O mahārāja, Karṇa
Repulsed the weapons
Of Ghaṭotkaca.
Smiling, Bhīma's mahā-
Muscled son Ghaṭotkaca

79 Invoked his mahā-māyā
Against the mahā-chariot-hero
Karṇa. Seeing the chariot
Of the excellent chariot-hero

80 Ghaṭotkaca approaching
Protected by a horde of rākṣasas,
Karṇa was not perturbed
By their resemblance to lions
And tigers and musth elephants.

81 Some were on horseback,
Some on elephants,
Others in chariots,
Variously armed,
Variously armoured,
Variously ornamented.

82 Targeting Ghaṭotkaca
In the midst of rākṣasas
Like Vāsava-Indra surrounded
By the gods, the brilliant bowman
Karṇa launched his attack.

83 Ghaṭotkaca wounded Karṇa
With five arrows, and roared
A pealing war-cry that terrorised
All the earth-lords.

84 With an *añjalika*-arrow
Ghaṭotkaca splintered
The massive bow of Karṇa –
A rainbow-like bow –
Along with all its arrows.

85 Karṇa prepared another bow,
Even stronger, as formidable
As Indra's own bow, and
Stretched it fully taut.

86 Mahārāja! Targeting
The sky-roaming rākṣasa,
Karṇa fired gold-winged
Foe-exterminating arrows.

87 Wounded
By those arrows,
The horde of broad-chested rākṣasas
Became agitated
Like a herd of wild elephants
Attacked
By a lion.

88 Like Vahni-Agni Bhagavān
The god of fire
Consuming creatures
At the end of a yuga,
Illustrious Karṇa
With his arrows annihilated
Rākṣasas, horses,
Charioteers and elephants.

89 Like Maheśvara-Śiva
In the distant past
Destroying in the sky
The anti-god Tripura,
The charioteer's son Karṇa
Gloried in destroying the rākṣasa.

90 O bestower of honour!
Of all the rājās there,
Not a single earth-lord Pāṇḍava
Had the courage
Even to look at Karṇa.

91 O rājā!
Only one, Ghaṭotkaca,
The Indra-among-rākṣasas,
The mahā-powerful one,
The one who resembled
The wrathful god of death
Vaivasvata-Yama,
Dared to face Karṇa.

92 O rājā!
Like drops of oil
Trickling down a flaming torch,
Angry fiery sparks
Issued from the eyes
Of the rākṣasa.

93 He rubbed his palms,
He bit his lips,
And riding
In a chariot
Created afresh
By his māyā-magic,

94 Pulled by *piśāca*-headed
Elephant-strong asses,
He ordered his charioteer:
"Drive me
To the charioteer's son!"

95 O lord of the world!
Riding in that fearful chariot,
The finest of chariot-heroes
Ghaṭotkaca
Recommenced his chariot-duel
With the charioteer's son
Karṇa.

96 Flaming with rage, the rākṣasa
Hurled against Karṇa
An eight-*cakra aśani*-thunderbolt
Fashioned by Rudra-Śiva himself –

97 Two *yojanas* high, one *yojana*
Long and wide, made of iron,
Studded with spikes, like hair-
Follicles on a kadamba-flower.

98 Karṇa laid his massive bow
In the chariot.
He leapt and seized
The missile,
And hurled it back
At Ghaṭotkaca,
Who jumped aside to safety.

99 That mahā-potent missile
Reduced to ashes
The horses, the charioteer,
And embedded itself
In the earth.
The gods watched and marvelled.

100 All who witnessed the feat
Offered pūjā-praise
To Karṇa
Who had leapt from his chariot
And seized the god-crafted
Mahā-*aśani*-missile.

101 The feat performed,
Karṇa
Returned to his chariot.
O foe-chastiser!
The charioteer's son
Started shooting
A volley of *nārāca*-arrows.

102 O bestower of honour!
The feat performed
By Karṇa
On the battlefield
Was beyond the power
Of any other creature
To perform.

103 Like a mountain
Drenched with heavy rain,
*Nārāca*-arrow-drenched
Ghaṭotkaca de-materialised
Into invisibility like
The sky-city of the Gandharvas.

104 With this strategy
The massive-bodied
Foe-liquidating
Māyā-manipulating
Ghaṭotkaca neutralised
The celestial weapons
Of Karṇa.

105 Despite the destruction
Of his weapons
By the māyā-magic
Of the rākṣasa,
Karṇa, unperturbed,
Continued to fight
Ghaṭotkaca.

106 Mahārāja!
The infuriated mahā-powerful
Son of Bhīma
Terrified the mahā-chariot-heroes
By assuming
Innumerable disguises.

107 In all directions
Materialised
Lions
Tigers
Hyenas
Fire-spitting snakes
Iron-beaked birds –
And began
To attack Karṇa.

108 It became difficult
Even to look
At Ghaṭotkaca,
As difficult as
Gazing at
Nāga-rāja
The serpent-king.
Targeted by Karṇa's
Swift arrows,
He disappeared
In a flash.

109 Suddenly
Rākṣasas
*Piśāca*-ogres
*Yātudhāna*-demons
*Śālāvṛka*-jackals
*Vṛka*-dogs
Materialised
Out of nowhere
On the field
Of battle

110 And leapt
At Karṇa
To bite
And devour him.
They came at him
From all directions
Screaming and roaring
And trying
In every way.
To terrorise him.

111 Brandishing
His fearful
Blood-smeared
Weapons
And a variety
Of arrows,
Karṇa wounded
Them all.

112 Repulsing
The māyā-magic
Of the rākṣasa
With his celestial weapons,
He killed Ghaṭotkaca's horses
With depressed-knot arrows.

113 Bodies ripped
By arrows, flanks
Mangled, backs lacerated,
Shanks mutilated,
The rākṣasa saw them
Drop dead.

114 Seeing his māyā
Nullified
By Vaikartana-Karṇa,
Hiḍimbā's son
Ghaṭotkaca
Said to him:
"Look! Your death
Has come!"
And made himself invisible
And simply vanished.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-SIX

1 While the clash between
Karṇa and the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca
Continued (said Sañjaya),
The valiant Alāyudha,
An Indra-among-rākṣasas,
Appeared on the battlefield.

2 With a large army
Of fearful-looking rākṣasas –
Thousands and thousands
Of his supporters –
He approached Duryodhana.

3 Recalling his enmity
With the Pāṇḍavas
(His valiant Brahmin-devouring
Relative Baka
Was killed by Bhīma),
He arrived there
With his rākṣasa rabble.

4 Bhīma had also killed
Mahā-energetic Kirmīra
And Hiḍimba, Alāyudha's
Loved-and-loving *sākhā.*
Alāyudha had bided his time,
Nursing his bitter memories.

5 Informed of the battle
At dead of night,
He had come hoping
To kill Bhīma.
Like a musth elephant,
Like a roused snake,
Battle-hungry,

6 He said to Duryodhana:
"Mahārāja!
You must be aware
That Bhīma
Has killed my rākṣasa

7 Friends and relatives:
Hidimba
Baka
Kirmīra.
Not only that –
A long time ago
He raped our daughter
Hiḍimbā.

8 What grosser insult
Can there be
For us rākṣasas
Than this?
So I am here, O rājā,
With warriors, horses,
Chariots, elephants,

9 To finish off
Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca
And all his followers
And advisors.
All the sons of Kuntī;
With Vāsudeva-Krishna
At their head – today

10 I will kill them,
And I and my followers
Will eat them
After killing them.
Order your army
To stop fighting.
We will fight
The Pāṇḍavas."

11 Surrounded by his brothers,
Duryodhana listened joyfully
To Alāyudha.
Accepting the plan,
He said:

12 "You will form
The front line.
We will together
Fight our enemy.
My soldiers hate
The Pāṇḍavas – I cannot
Restrain them."

13 "*Evam-asti*! So be it!"
The bull-brave rākṣasa
Replied to rājā Duryodhana,
And immediately he
And his man-eating followers
Attacked Bhīma's son
Ghaṭotkaca.

14 O Indra-among-rājās!
His body was a mass
Of radiance, his chariot
Dazzled like the sun.
He was as resplendent
As Ghaṭotkaca himself.

15 His multi-flagged mahā-chariot
Reverberated with an
Incomparable clatter;
It was fully covered
With bear-skins;
Its length and breadth
Were four hundred cubits.

16 The horses pulling it
Were amazingly swift,
And strong like elephants,
And they brayed like asses.
One hundred of them –
Their mahā-bodies
Gorged on flesh and blood.

17 The clatter of the chariot
Was like the rumble
Of a mahā-cloud.
His bow was tough,
His bowstring taut,
Glowing like gold.

Transcreated by P. Lal

18 His stone-sharpened arrows
Had wings of gold,
They were thick and strong
As a chariot *akṣa*-axle.
Heroic Alāyudha
Was as mahā-muscled
As Ghaṭotkaca.

19 His war-flag
Dazzled
Like sun
Or like fire.
Its symbol
Was the vulture.
Cruel face glowing,
He shone like Ghaṭotkaca.

20 His armlets, diadem and necklace
Dazzled. His head-gear sheathed
A sword. His weapons included
Maces, *bhuśuṇḍi* firearms, ploughs,
*Musala*-clubs and bows.

21 He looked magnificent
In his chariot
That dazzled
Like fire
As he sped
Here and there
Like a lightning-
Streaked cloud
Roaming the sky
Crushing the Pāṇḍavas
On the field of battle.

22 The Indras-among-men
The Pāṇḍavas also
Mahā-powerful warriors
Encased in armour
Protected by shields
Cheerfully confronted
The rākṣasa Alāyudha
On the field of battle,
O rājā!

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-SEVEN

1 Seeing Alāyudha
Doer-of-horrendous-karma
In their midst
(continued Sañjaya)
The Kauravas were delighted.

2 Your sons too,
Headed by Duryodhana,
Rejoiced,
Like boatless people
Eager to cross the sea
Suddenly chancing
On a rescue vessel.

3 It was as if
The respect-worthy bull-brave
Kauravas were re-born.
They received Alāyudha
The Indra-among-rākṣasas
With a pūjā-welcome.

4 Awesome
Mahā-fearful
Inhuman
Terrifying to watch
The night-battle continued
Between Karṇa
And the rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca.

5 Neither Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Nor Kṛpa
Nor Droṇa
Nor Śalya
Nor the Mādhava Kṛtavarman
Could face Ghaṭotkaca.
His sole challenger
Was Karṇa.

6 O rājā! The Pāñcālas
And other rājās stood
And watched, as did
Your soldiers stationed
All over the battlefield.

7 Witnessing the fearful feats
Of Hiḍimbā's son
Ghaṭotkaca
On the battlefield,
Anxious Droṇa
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Kṛpa and others
Lamented : "All is lost!"

8 Mahārāja!
Fearing for the life
Of Karṇa,
All your soldiers seemed
To have lost their senses
And kept wailing "Hai! Hai!"

9 Seeing Karṇa
In that desperate plight,
Duryodhana summoned
Alāyudha
The Indra-among-rākṣasas
And said to him:

10 "Look!
Vaikartana-Karṇa
Is locked in battle
With the son of Hiḍimbā.
Whatever feats of valour
Are possible –
Those feats he is showing.

11 Look!
There they lie
Sprawled
Wounded
Dead –
So many brave heroes
Struck down
By Bhīma's son
Ghaṭotkaca
Like trees
Uprooted
And trampled
By an elephant.

12 O valiant one!
Because you so wished,
From this galaxy of rājās
I have chosen you
To eliminate Ghaṭotkaca.
Prove your prowess!
Kill him!

13 O foe-destroyer!
Let it never happen
That vicious Ghaṭotkaca
Succeeds in killing
Vaikartana-Karṇa
With the power of his māyā.
Kill him first."

14 Ordered
By rājā Duryodhana
The dreadful-deed-doing mahā-muscled
Rākṣasa Alāyudha
Said "It will be done"
And attacked Ghaṭotkaca.

15 *Prabhu*! Lord!
Bhīma's son
Ghaṭotkaca
Left off
Attacking Karṇa
And deluged
His advancing foe
With a volley of arrows.

16 The ensuing clash
Between the two
Indras-among-rākṣasas
Both anger-inflamed
Resembled a duel
Between two rutting elephants
Over a she-elephant.

17 With Ghaṭotkaca gone,
Excelling chariot-hero Karṇa
Swerved his sun-bright chariot
And concentrated his fury
On Bhīma.

18 Ignoring the assault
Of Karṇa,
And seeing Ghaṭotkaca
Struggling
Against Alāyudha,
Like a bull
Charging a lion,

19 Finest-of-foe-crushers
Bhīma,
Riding his sun-
Dazzling chariot,
Swooped upon
The chariot of Alāyudha.

20 *Prabhu*! Lord!
Seeing Bhīma
Advancing swiftly
Towards him,
Alāyudha left Ghaṭotkaca
And concentrated
On Bhīma.

21 *Prabhu!* Lord!
The liquidator-of-rākṣasas
Bhīma
Met the Indra-among-rākṣasas
Alāyudha
Head on
And shrouded him and his followers
With arrows.

22 O foe-crushing rājā!
Alāyudha also
Rained stone-sharpened arrows
Again and again
On Kuntī's son Bhīma.

23 Eager to win victory
For your son Duryodhana,
All the fearful rākṣasas
Armed with
A variety of weapons
Attacked Bhīma
From all sides.

24 Though assailed
By hordes of rākṣasas
And wounded,
Bhīma repulsed them
With five arrows each.

25 Repulsed By Bhīma,
The malignant-minded rākṣasas
Fled wounded
And screaming in agony
In all the ten directions.

26 Seeing his followers
Put to flight by fear of Bhīma,
The mahā-powerful rākṣasa
Alāyudha resumed
His arrow-showers on Bhīma.

27 Bhīma retaliated
With a volley of sharp arrows.
Some of these arrows
Were in midflight
By Alāyudha

28 Sliced
And brought down;
Others he leapt up
And caught with his hands.
Seeing this awesome feat
Of the Indra-among-rākṣasas,
Valiant-in-war Bhīma

29 Hurled at him
A mace that sped
Like a thunderbolt.
Seeing that flaming mace
Shooting towards him
At incredible speed,

30 Alāyudha blocked it
With his own mace,
And it swerved
And sped back at Bhīma.
Kuntī's son Bhīma
Enveloped the Indra-among-rākṣasas,
In an arrow-shower,

31 Which the rākṣasa frustrated
With a volley
Of his own sharp arrows.
The horrendous-visaged
Rākṣasa warriors,

32 Acting on orders
From the Indra-among-rākṣasas
Alāyudha,
Destroyed the chariots
And butchered the elephants
Of their foes.
The Pāñcālas
The Sṛñjayas
Their horses
Their splendid elephants –

33 Found no respite
From the rākṣasa onslaught.
Seeing the way
The mahā-gruesome carnage
Continued in that mahā-war,

34 Lotus-eyed Krishna
Said to Dhanañjaya-Arjuna:
"Look! Mahā-muscled Bhīma
Is trapped
By the Indra-among-rākṣasas
Alāyudha.

35 Leave everything,
Son of Pāṇḍu!
Go to him.
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Śikhaṇḍin
Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujas

36 And Draupadī's sons will attack Karṇa.
Nakula
Sahadeva
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki –

37 Order these brave heroes
To attack the other rākṣasas,
While you, O mahā-musled one,
Keep Droṇa in check.

38 O tiger-among-men!
Our soldiers are panicking.
A fearful plight
Has overtaken them."
Acting on Krishna's advice,
The mahā-chariot-heroes

39 Advanced
To attack Karṇa
And the rākṣasas.
With arrows fired
From a bow pulled
Fully taut –
Snake-venomous arrows –

40 The Indra-among-rākṣasas,
Alāyudha
Splintered the bow
Of Bhīma. Next,
The mahā-powerful rākṣasa
Slaughtered Bhīma's horses
And his charioteer

41 Before the very eyes
Of Bhīma.
Without his horses
And without his charioteer,
Bhīma leapt
From his chariot

42 And roaring his war-cry
Hurled
A fearful, heavy mace
At the rākṣasa.
Seeing that whistling
Mahā-mace
Hurtling towards him,

43 The ferocious rākṣasa
Alāyudha blocked it
With his own flying mace,
And roared horrendously.
Witnessing the awesome feat
Of the Indra-among-rākṣasas
Alāyudha,

44 Bhīma's ātman
Was delighted.
Quickly, he lifted
Another mace.
The gory clash
That took place
Between the rākṣasa
And the human,

45 As their maces
Swung and collided,
Made the earth tremble.
After hurling their maces,
They pummelled
Each other

46 With clenched fists
That thudded
Like thunderbolts.
Chariot wheels and *akṣas*,
Standing platforms and other
Chariot *upakarṇa*-paraphernalia –

47 In fact, whatever
They could lay hands on –
Were used as weapons
To frighten and maim
Each other.
Blood streamed from
Their bodies in that
Horrendous clash,

48 Which was like
The encounter
Of two musth
Mahā-elephants
Colliding in anger
Again and again.
When always-concerned-
With-Pāṇḍava-welfare
Hṛṣikeśa-Krishna saw this,
He advised Hiḍimbā's son
Ghaṭotkaca to save
His father Bhīma.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-EIGHT

1 O rājā!
(continued Sañjaya)
Seeing Bhīma pinned down
On the battlefield
By the rākṣasa,
Vāsudeva-Krishna
Said to Ghaṭotkaca:

2 "O mahā-valiant one!
Mahā-muscled hero!
Look!
Before your very eyes
The rākṣasas have trapped
Bhīma.

3 O mahā-muscled one!
Leave Karṇa for now.
Kill the Indra-among-rākṣasas
Alāyudha first. And quickly!
Then kill Karṇa."

4 Heeding the advice
Of the Vṛṣṇi-descendant Krishna,
Valiant Ghaṭotkaca
Left off battling with Karṇa
And proceeded to attack
Baka's brother Alāyudha.



5 O Bharata!
That night
A brutal
And bewildering battle raged
Between Alāyudha
And Hiḍimbā's son
Ghaṭotkaca.

6 The rākṣasas of Alāyudha
Were gruesome warriors.
Brandishing their bows,
They were expert
In fierce
And vigorous assaults
On their foes,

7 But the mahā-chariot-heroes
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
Nakula and Sahadeva
Beat them back
With volleys
Of sharp arrows.

8 O rājā!
Diadem-decked
Dreadful-deed-doing
Bibhatsu-Arjuna
Harassed the ranks
Of the bull-brave
Kṣatriya Kauravas
With ubiquitous arrows.

9 Equally, O rājā,
Karṇa routed
The mahā-chariot-hero
Lords of the earth –
Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Śikhaṇḍin
And the Pāñcālas.

10 Seeing them persecuted
By the fierce arrows,
Unbelievably valiant Bhīma
Attacked Karṇa
With showers of arrows.

11 Satisfied with slaughtering
Countless rākṣasas,
Nakula and Sahadeva
And the mahā-chariot-
Hero Sātyaki
Rushed to the spot
Where the charioteer's son
Karṇa was fighting.

12 The three together
Targeted Karṇa,
And the Pāñcālas
Targeted Droṇa.
With a *pangha* iron club
Wrathful Alāyudha wounded
Foe-exterminating Ghaṭotkaca.

13 Struck in the head,
Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca
Tottered half-unconscious,
But the mahā-muscled
Valiant hero
Quickly recovered,

14 And hurled
On his adversary
His golden
Flaming-like-fire
Tinkling-with-a-hundred-bells
Massive mace.

15 Hurled
By that doer of dereadful deeds
That mace sped
Whistling with mahā-velocity
And shattered
Alāyudha's chariot
His charioteer
And his horses.

16 Wheels
Axle
Horses – destroyed
War-flag – shredded
Wooden frame – splintered
Rākṣasa Alāyudha
Invoked his mayā-magic
And soared away
To safety.

17 With his māyā-magic
He released
Streams of blood
From an overcast sky
Flashing with lightning.

18 In that mahā-battleground
Thunderbolts fell
Clouds roared
Lightning flashed
And mahā-*caṭ-caṭ*-noises
Reverberated.

19 That rākṣasa-māyā
Was evaporated
By Hiḍimbā's son
Ghaṭotkaca
With his own rākṣasa-māyā
By leaping up
In the sky.

20 Seeing his māyā cancelled
By the counter-māyā
Of his adversary,
Māyā-making Alāyudha
Rained a hail
Of fearful boulders
On Ghaṭotkaca's head.

21 With a shower of arrows
Valiant Ghaṭotkaca
Shattered each boulder
In whichever direction
The boulder sped.
A wondrous feat!

22 Then began
A mutual multitude
Of weapons-showers:
*Parigha* spiked iron clubs
*Śūla*-lances
Maces called *gadas*
Maces called *musalas*
*Mudgara*-mallets

23 *Pināka*-tridents
*Karavala*-scimitars
*Tomara*-javelins
*Prāsa* barded darts
*Kampana*-missiles
Sharp *nārāca*-arrows
*Bhalla*-arrows
Many other arrows
*Cakras*
Wheels
And also
*Paraśva*-hatchets

24 Iron *guḍa*-balls
*Bhindipāla*-slicers
Cow-headed *gośīrṣa*-arrows
*Ulūkhala*-mortars
All kinds of huge
Uprooted trees –
Hardwood *śamī*
*Pilu*-palm
Orange-coloured fragrant kadamba
And champak
O Bharata –

25 Medicinal *iṅguda*
*Badarī*-jujube
*Kovidara* paradise tree
Flowering flame-of-the-forest
The *pālāśa*
*Arimeda*-mimosa
*Plakṣa* waved-leaf fig-tree
*Nyagrodha*-banyan
The sacred fig-tree *pippala* –

26 The two adversaries
Hurled at each other,
Along with various
Mineral-laden rocks
And peaks of mountains.

27 The mahā-noise produced
By the trees and peaks
Hurled at each other
Reverberated like thunder.
O rājā!
The horrendous clash
Between Alāyudha
And Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca

28 Resembled the battle
In the distant past
Between the two
Indras-among-simians
Bāli and Sugrīva.
With varied weapons
And arrows they fought,

29 And in the end
Rushed upon each other
With sharp swords.
The more-than-mahā-
Powerfu rākṣasas
With mahā-powerful hands
Grasped each other
By their head-hair.

30 O lord of men!
Blood and sweat
Mingled on their bodies
And streamed down,
Making the massive heroes
Look like two huge clouds
Pouring torrential rain.

31 Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca
Whirled Alāyudha by his hair
Up high, flung him
On the ground and swiftly
Severed his huge head.

32 Holding aloft
The glittering
Ear-ringed head,
The more-than-mahā-
Powerful Ghaṭotkaca
Screamed
An ear-splitting roar.

33 Seeing the mahā-
Bodied brother of Baka –
Alāyudha –
Foe-exterminating Alāyudha –
Killed,
The Pāñcālas and Pāṇḍavas
Screamed leonine war-cries.

34 The death of the rākṣasa
Made the hosts
Of Pāṇḍava warriors
Beat hundreds of drums
And blow
Thousands of conches.

35 They gloried that night
In that great victory,
Celebrating it
With lamps that lit up
The battlefield.

36 Bhīma's mahā-powerful
Son Ghaṭotkaca
Flung the severed head
Of Alāyudha
Before stupefied Duryodhana.

37 O Bharata!
Rājā Duryodhana
And his entire army
Were filled with fearful anxiety
At Alāyudha's death.

38 Remembering his vow of revenge,
Alāyudha had come
On his own to Duryodhana
And pledged
To kill Bhīma.

39 Earth-lord Duryodhana
Had taken for granted
The death of Bhīma,
And reassured himself
Of the long life
Of his own brothers.

40 But seeing the death
Of Alāyudha at the hands
Of Bhīma's son,
He worried that Bhīma's vow
To kill him and his brothers
Was about to come true.

SECTION ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-NINE

1 Ghaṭotkaca (continued Sañjaya),
Rejoiced
After killing Alāyudha
And roared his delight
In front of the army.

2 Mahārāja!
The noise of his
Elephant-shaking roars
Stunned your soldiers
And made them fear
The worst.

3 Seeing the mahā-powerful
Son of Bhīma
Locked in combat
With Alāyudha,
Mahā-muscled Karṇa
Attacked the Pāñcālas.

4 Pulling his bow
Fully taut,
He shot ten
Depressed-knot arrows each
At Dhṛṣṭadyumna
And Śikhaṇḍin.

5 Next,
With excellent
*Nārāca*-arrows
The charioteer's son
Made Yudhāmanyu
Uttamaujas
And the chariot-hero Sātyaki
Tremble.

6 O lord of men!
They also
Counter-attacked
With bows stretched
Fully taut
In maṇḍala-circles.

[VII:179:7-10]

Transcreated by P. Lal

7 In the darkness
Of the night
The twang of their bowstrings
And rattle of their chariots
Reverberated like thunder
From dark rain-clouds.

8 O rājā!
The battle –
the rain-cloud
Chariot-clatter and bow-twang –
the thunder
War-flags – the cloud-crests
Arrow-showers –
the torrential rain.

9 O Indra-among-men!
Standing tall and erect
Like a mountain
Immovable
And unassailable
Vaikartana-Karṇa
The foe-destroying hero
Scattered and repulsed
The showers
Of arrows.

10 Wisher-of-the-welfare.
Of-your-sons
Vaikartana-Karṇa
The mahātmā hero
With feathered
Thunderbolt-fierce
Incomparably sharp arrows
Began a systematic
Slaughter of the ranks
Of his foes.

11 Some had their war-flags
shredded
Some had their bodies
ripped and hacked
Some were made to bleed
from piercing shafts
Some saw their charioteers
killed
Some saw their horses
slaughtered.

12 Desperate
Dispersed
Decimated
The soldiers sought safety
In Yudhiṣṭhira's ranks.
Seeing them fleeing in panic
Ghaṭotkaca's mind
Spun
In frantic fury.

13 Standing in his
Resplendent chariot
Decorated with gold
And gems
Roaring his
Leonine war-cries
He enveloped
Vaikartana-Karṇa
With arrows
That sped
Like thunderbolts.

14 They filled the sky
With their roars
And their arrows –
Ear-shaped *karṇis*
Sword-mouthed *śilimukhas*
Slim *nālikas* and rod-like *daṇḍas*
Wooden asanas and large *vipāṭhas*
Horned *śṛṅgas* and razor-keen *kṣurapras*
And boar-eared *varāhakarṇas.*

15 With all those arrows
Soaring
In the sky
Like golden feathers
Flaunting their beauty and
Dazzling the eyes
The sky became
A spectacle of enchantment
Of arrow-flower-garlands
Flying in formations
Of festive festoons.

16 Both were
equally matched
Both had
the same weapons
Both wounded each other
equally
Neither excelled
the other
on the battlefield.

17 Spectacular
That battle
Between Ravī-Sūrya's son
Karṇa
And Bhīma's son
Ghaṭotkaca –
As unparalleled
As the battle
Between Rāhu
the Eclipser
And Aṁśumat
the Sun.

18 O king!
(Sañjaya continued)
When Ghaṭotkaca discovered
He was unable
To overpower Karṇa,
He invoked
And materialised
A supremely dreadful missile.

19 With that missile
He killed Karṇa's chariot
And disintegrated
His chariot. Then,
Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca
Made himself invisible.

20 "Sañjaya," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"What did my sons do
When the rākṣasa
Tricked them
In this way?"

21 Seeing the Indra-
Among-rākṣasas
Disappear in a flash,
The Kaurava warriors
Shouted:
"If the rākṣasa
Plays tricks like this,
He will surely
Kill Karṇa."

22 With a net
Of arrows
Versatile in weapons-craft –
Karṇa
Shrouded all
The ten directions.
Such was the darkness
Created by that shower
That none could make out
Who was who
And where.

23 The dexterity
Of the son of the Sūta
Was such
You could not tell
When the arrow
Was selected and fitted
And aimed and fired.
All inter-space
Was dark with arrows.

24 Suddenly
The rākṣasa created
In inter-space
A deadly and dreadful māyā.
First
A blood-red cloud
Appeared in the sky.
Then
Fearful lapping flames
Consumed the sky.

25 O Indra-
Of-the-Kauravas!
From the cloud
Shot bolts of lightning
And flaming meteors
And thunderous noise
Reverberating
Like the din
Of a thousand
*Dundubhi*-drums.

26 From the cloud
Descended a shower
Of weapons –
Gold-feathered arrows
*Śakti*-spears
*Ṛṣti*-lances
*Prāsa* barbed darts
*Musala*-maces
*Praśva*-hatchets
Oil-polished swords
Glittering *tomara*-javelins
Three-pointed *paṭṭiśa*-spears

27 Dazzling spiked iron *parigha* clubs
Attractive iron-ribbed maces
Sharp-pointed *śūla*-lances
Heavy maces
Entwined with gold filaments
*Śataghni* fire-missiles –
Falling everywhere
On the battlefield.

28 And thousands of
Mahā-boulders
Fell as well
And thunderbolts
Reverberated
And lightning flashed
And blazing wheels
And hundreds
Of razor-missiles . . .

29 With his volleys
Of arrows
Fired in a steady stream
Karṇa failed to destroy
All the fiery weapons:
*Śakti*-spears
*Pāśa*-nooses
*Paraśva*-hatchets
*Vajra*-thunderbolts
*Aśani*-lightning
*Mudgara*-mallets.

30 In that deafening
Chaos of mahā-noises
Arrow-pierced horses
collapsed
Thunderbolt-hit elephants
toppled
Boulder-struck mahā-chariot-heroes
screamed . . .

31 Assailed
By the manifold
Tumultuous
Terrible
Downpour
Of Ghaṭotkaca's weapons
The soldiers
Of Duryodhana panicked
And broke ranks
And wandered
Lost and aimless
On the battlefield.

32 Everywhere
Wails
"Hai! Hai!"
Everywhere
Warriors fleeing
In agony and ruin . . .
But the brave
Stood firm,
The ārya-noble
Did not retreat.

33 Nevertheless
Panic seized
Your sons
When they saw
The horrible and horrendous
Mahā-weapons
Of the rākṣasa
Descending in torrents
On the heads
Of their soldiers.

34 O Indra-among-rājās!
Seeing hundreds
Of jackals with tongues
Like flickering flames
Weirdly howling,
And hordes of rākṣasas
Also screaming,
Your warriors were
In a state
Of terror and shock.

35 Brandishing śakti-spears
The hill-huge hordes
Of rākṣasas
With mouths
Breathing flames
And fang-like teeth
Gathered like clouds
High in the sky
And rained fierce weapons
On their foes.

36 Mangled and crushed
By the torrents
Of arrows
*Śakti*-spears
*Śūla*-lances
Macer
Blazing *parigha* iron clubs
Thunderbolts
*Pinākā*-tridents
*Śataghni* fire-missiles
And wheels
The Kauravas perished
In swarms.

37 The rākṣasas continued
To assail your son
With śūlas and *śataghnis*
Iron balls and *bhusuṇḍi*-firearms
And pillar-like *sthūṇas.*
Your soldiers were trapped
In a mire of confusion.

38 Heads smashed
And pulped
With stones,
Limbs maimed
And mangled,
Elbow joints
Protruding,
They lay asprawl
On the field.
Beside them:
Butchered horses
Dismembered elephants
Shattered chariots.

39 Spawned by the māyā
Of Ghaṭotkaca,
The fiendish-figured
Yātudhāna evil spirits
Rained the mahā-weapons-shower,
Sparing neither the terror-struck
Nor those who begged for mercy.

40 That gory slaughter
Of Kṣatriya heroes
Seemed to be the work
Of none but Kāla
The Spirit of Cosmic Time
Devouring the Kauravas
Who fled helter-skelter
Screaming
In hopeless agony:

41 "Fly, Kauravas!
Fly!
All is doomed!
The gods led by Indra
Are here
To help the Pāṇḍavas"
No hope then
For the drowning
Bharata warriors
Except one:
The island called Karṇa.

42 When the carnage
Began,
And the tattered ranks
Fled,
The Kauravas hiding
Wherever possible,
You could not tell
In the chaos
Who was Kaurava
And who Pāṇḍava.

43 In that murderous
And maleficent battle,
Wherever the fleeing
Warriors looked,
They saw: Nothing.
Emptiness.
Only one shape
Stood firm and clear,
Facing the weapons-shower:
Karṇa.

44 Karṇa was the one
Self-effacing Karṇa
The Sūta's son Karṇa
Performer of daring
And difficult feats
Unconfused Karṇa
Who stood there shooting
His volleys of arrows
At the mayā-magic-marvel
Created by the rākṣasa.

45 O rājā!
The Saindhavas
And the Bāhlīkas
Witnessed the victory
Of the rākṣasa
But the pujā-respect
Which they offered
Was given to Karṇa
Who calmly and fearlessly
Kept on fighting.

46 Ghaṭotkaca discharged
A *śataghni* fire-missile
Propelled on wheels
At Karṇa's chariot
Killing all four horses
Who lay on the field
Disembowelled corpses
Of crushed teeth
Gouged eyes
And shredded flanks.

47 Karṇa leapt out
Of the horseless chariot
And stood on the field
Collecting his thoughts
While the Kauravas fled.
His celestial weapons
Were ineffective against
The māyā of Ghaṭotkaca.
His mind was calm.
What should he do next?

48 Alarmed by the fearful-
Formed māyā
Of the rākṣasa,
The Kauravas said
To Karṇa:
"Karṇa!
Use your *śakti*-missile
And kill the rākṣasa!
If you refuse,
The sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
And all the Kauravas
Are doomed.

49 Bhīma and Arjuna
Cannot do us much harm.
Kill this vicious rākṣasa,
At midnight,
Before he kills us all.
Those of us who survive
Will fight tomorrow the army
Of Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons.

50 Kill this fearful-
Figured rākṣasa
With the *śakti*-missile
Given to you
By Vāsava-Indra.
O Karṇa!
Let it not happen
That the valiant-as-Indra
Kaurava warriors
Are all exterminated tonight
By this rākṣasa."

51 Seeing the plight
Of the Kauravas
Wounded and terrified
By the night-attacks
Of the rākṣasa,
Moved by their mahā-
Mournful appeal,
Karṇa resolved to use
The *śakti*-missile.

52 Like an enraged lion,
Unable to bear
The ruin of his weapons
By the rākṣasa,
Determined to kill him
Once and for all,
Karṇa made ready
The incomparable
And invincible victory-
Missile Vaijayantī.

53 O rājā!
The missile
That he had cherished
Over the years
To slaughter
Phālguna-Arjuna,
The *śakti*-missile
Gifted by Śakra-Indra
In exchange for Karṇa's
Golden flesh-earrings –

54 That radiant blood -
Sucking *śakti*-missile
Resembling the lolling tongue
Of Antaka
The Deity of Doom –
That missile resembling
Death's sister herself –
That missile resembling
A flaming meteor –
Vaikartana-Karṇa
Hurled at Ghaṭotkaca.

55 Seeing that magnificent,
Flaming, flesh-
Shredding *śakti*-missile
In the hands
Of Karṇa,
Ghaṭotkaca swelled
His body to the size
Of a Vindhya peak,
And fled in terror.

56 Seeing the *śakti*-missile
In the hands of Karṇa,
O Indra-among-men,
The creatures of the sky
Broke out
In loud lamentation.
Violent storms raged
Suddenly, and thunderbolts
Struck the earth.

57 The *śakti*-missile
Sizzled its way
Through the māyā
Of Ghaṭotkaca,
Dispersing the illusion
Of reality;
It drilled
Through his chest,
And soared in the night-sky
And disappeared
In the clusters of stars.

58 Already scarred
With many wounds
Received in battles
With demi-god Nāgas,
Humans and rākṣasas,
Now shattered by the
*Śakti* of Śakra-Indra,
Ghaṭotkaca, roaring
In agony,
Surrendered his life-breath.

59 O rājā!
Listen to the wondrous
Feat he accomplished
At the time of his death.
Mangled and shredded
By the *śakti*-missile,
His vital organs pierced,
He shone with the glory
Of a massive mountain
And a giant cloud.

60 O rājā!
The dreadful-deed-doing
Son
Of a dreadful-deed-doing
Father –
Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca –
Assuming an awesome form,
Fell.
Even as he fell
He crushed to death
Many of your warriors.

61 O rājā!
That Indra-among-rākṣasas
He fell
With a mutilated
Awesome-looking body
From the skyey interspace
To earth,
His tongue hanging out,
His body stiff,

62 He fell,
That wisher-of-the-welfare
Of the Pāṇḍavas,
But even as he fell,
Giving up his life,
That gigantic,
Swelling body crushed
An entire *akṣauhiṇī*
Of soldiers.

63 And immediately
A cacophony of sounds
Reverberated:
Leonine war-cries
Drums
Conches
Cymbals . . .
Māyā dissipated
Rākṣasa slaughtered –
The Kauravas celebrated
With thunderous joy.

64 Like Śakra-Indra
Extolled by the Marut
Storm-gods
When he killed Vṛtra,
Karṇa, pūjā-
Praised by the Kauravas,
Climbed into the chariot
Of your son Duryodhana
And drove to the ranks
Of his own army.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY

1 Seeing Hiḍimbā's son
Ghaṭotkaca killed
Like a shattered hill
(continued Sañjaya),
The eyes of the Pāṇḍavas
Brimmed with tears
Of grief.

2 But Vāsudeva-Krishna
Thrilled with joy
And screamed
Leonine war-cries
And hugged
Phālguna-Arjuna.

3 With mahā-victory cries
He reined in
The chariot's horses
And danced about
In joy, like a tree
Swaying in the wind.

4 He hugged Pārtha
Arjuna again
And thumped his back.
Then Acyuta-Krishna
Retired to the back
Of the chariot,
Sat down,
And roared again.

5 O rājā!
Seeing Vāsudeva-Krishna
Dancing
In joyous excitement,
Mahā-powerful Arjuna
Was upset.
He said:

6 "Madhusūdana-Krishna!
The slaughter
Of Hiḍimbā's son
Is for us a cause
For deep grief.
Why this mistimed
Burst of joy?

7 Seeing Ghaṭotkaca killed,
Our soldiers are fleeing.
The death of
Hiḍimbā's son
Has plunged us all
In grief.

8 Janārdana-Krishna!
There must be
A very good reason
For your great joy.
I ask you why.
O finest of truth-speakers!
Tell me the truth.

9 O foe-exterminator!
If it is not a secret,
Then tell me why.
Madhusūdana-Krishna!
What can be the reason
For this loss
Of composure?

10 Janārdana-Krishna!
Like the ocean drying up,
Like Mount Meru tottering –
That is how weird
Your joy looks today.
That's what I think."

11 Vāsudeva-Krishna replied:
"Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
You are right.
I am flooded with joy.
As to why –
Let me tell you.
I am happy today
For the most glorious
Of reasons.

12 Mahā-valiant
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
With the *śakti*-missile
Spent on Ghaṭotkaca,
Consider Karṇa
As good as dead.

13 What man would dare
Confront Karṇa
Armed with that *śakti*,
As invincible as the
War-god Kārtikeya?

14 It is our good luck
His armour is gone,
It is our good luck
He's without his flesh-earrings,
It is now more good luck
The invincible *śakti*-missile
Has been absorbed
By Ghaṭotkaca.

15 Had Karṇa
His flesh-armour
And flesh-earrings
He could singlehanded
Have defeated the three worlds
And the gods of these worlds.

16 Not Vāsava-Indra
Not Kubera
Not the water-lord
Jaleśvara-Varuṇa
Would have dared
Face him then.

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17 Even if the two of us –
You with your Gāṇḍīva,
I with my Sudarśana-cakra –
Had clashed with that
Bull-brave hero in battle
Protected by flesh-armour-and-earrings,
We could not have defeated him.

18 Śakra-Indra used māyā
To trick him to part
With his flesh-armour-and-earrings
Because he wanted to save you
From that destroyer-
Of-enemies'-cities.

19 With his own hands
Karṇa sliced the dazzling gift of
His flesh-armour-and-earrings
For Indra –
Which is why
He is known as Vaikartana
'The Slicer'.

20 I think Karṇa now
Is like a venomous snake
Or a raging fire
Tamed and made harmless
By a mantra.

21 From the moment
Mahā-ātmaned Vāsava-Indra
Gifted the *śakti*-missile
Which killed Ghaṭotkaca,
O mahā-powerful Arjuna,

22 In exchange for the divine
Flesh-armour-and-earrings –
From that moment
Vṛṣa-Karṇa treated you
As dead on the battlefield.

23 O tiger-among-men!
Even now, no one can kill
Karṇa but you.
O defectless one!
I vow this is the truth.

24 Respectful-to-Brahmins
Truth-speaking
Tapasyā-practising
Strict-vowed
Merciful-to-foes
Karṇa
Is also called Vṛṣa
'The Virtuous One'.

25 Brilliant-in-battle
Mahā-muscular
Ever-ready-with-his-bow
Forest-lion-like
Leader-elephant-who-tames-
Other-herd-elephants

26 Karṇa is the one
Who humbles the pride
Of lion-like chariot-heroes
Karṇa is like the fierce
Sun at high noon
Blindingly dazzling.

27 Like the autumn sun
Shooting countless rays,
O lion-like monarch, this
Mahā-ātmaned hero
Shoots thousands of arrows.

28 Like a heavy rain cloud
At summer end
Pours copious showers
On the parched land,
Karṇa is the cloud
Loaded with divine missiles
Which he discharges
In interminable showers
On his enemies.

29 He cannot be defeated
Even by the gods
Who are expert
In shooting arrows
That shed blood
And mangle limbs.

30 Son of Pāṇḍu!
Deprived of his divine
Flesh-armour-and-earrings
Gifted by Śakra-Indra,
Karṇa today
Is a mere mortal.

31 Only one way
Can you kill him.
When the wheels
Of his chariot
Get stuck in the mud,
That is your chance –
Kill him!
I will give the sign.

32 Once Karṇa takes up arms,
Even Bala-destroying, thunder–
Wielding Indra cannot defeat him.
Jarāsaṁdha, the mahātmā Cedi-
Rājā Śiśupāla, mahā-muscled
Ekalavya of the Niṣādas –

33 One by one
I have killed them all,
Using various means,
For your welfare.
Also dead,
One way or another,
Are the Indras-among rākṣasas
Hiḍimba
Kirmira
Baka
Foe-crushing Alāyudha
And dreadful-deed-doing
Illustrious Ghaṭotkaca.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-ONE

1 “Janārdana-Krishna,”
asked Arjuna,
“How and using what means
Were Jarāsaṁdha
And other earth-lords killed
For our welfare?”

2 “Had Jarāsaṁdha, the Cedi-rājā
And the mahā-powerful Niṣada
Not been killed,” said Vāsudeva-Krishna,
“They would have posed
Very serious problems now.

3 Duryodhana would have asked
Those excelling chariot-heroes
To become his allies.
Because they hate us,
They would have joined
The Kauravas.

4 Mahā-bowmen
Versatile-in-all-weapons
Dedicated-to-warfare
They would have helped
The Dhṛtarāṣṭrans
Like so many immortal gods.

5 The charioteer’s son Karṇa
Jarāsaṁdha
The Cedi-rājā Śiśupāla
The Niṣāda-scion Ekalavya –
Had these four together
Sided with Suyodhana-Duryodhana,
They would have conquered
The entire earth.

6 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
Different yoga-stratagems
Were employed
To get rid of them.
Let me explain.
If these stratagems
Had not been used,
Even the gods
Could not have killed them.

7 Pārtha-Arjuna!
Each singly could have
Challenged the entire army
Of all the gods
Who have the Lokapāla
World-guardians as their allies.

8 A long time ago,
Rohiṇī's son Balarāma defeated
Jarāsaṁdha, who, incensed,
Hurled a murderous all-annihilating
Mace at us.

9 That fire-dazzling mace
Sped through space
With the velocity
Of Śakra-Indra's thunderbolt,
Neatly parting
The sky-hair.

10 Seeing the mace
About to strike us,
Rohiṇī's son Balarāma
Decided to repulse it
By using the weapon
Called Sthūṇākarṇa.

11 Struck in its course by
The Cow-Eared-Pillar-
Missile of Balarāma,
The mace plunged
Into the earth
Drilling a hole
And making the mountains
Shudder.

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12 Where it fell
Dwelt a fierce rākṣasī
Called Jarā,
A supremely powerful woman
Who joined the two halves
Of foe-crushing Jarāsaṁdha's body.

13 He was born
From two mothers,
One half from each.
Because Jarā joined
The two halves,
He was named
Jarāsaṁdha, 'Joined-by-Jarā'.

14 Pārtha-Arjuna!
When the Sthūṇākarṇa-
Missile struck the mace,
And the mace plummetted,
The rākṣasī was killed
Along with her sons
And relatives.

15 Deprived of his mace
In that maha-clash,
Jarāsaṁdha was killed
Before your very eyes,
O Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

16 O finest of men!
Assume that Jarāsaṁdha –
Valiant Jarāsaṁdha –
Had not lost his mace . . .
Indra with all the gods
Would not have had
The śakti to defeat him
On the battlefield.

17 It was for your benefit
That ācārya Droṇa
Tricked the valiant-
In-truth Ekalavya
Of the Niṣādas
And deprived him
Of his thumb.

18 Dedicated valiant
And proud of his skill,
The Niṣāda Ekalavya
Roamed in the forests
Like a second Rāma,
His fingers encased
In leather-protectors.

19 Had he not been deprived
Of his thumb,
Pārtha-Arjuna,
The gods and Dānavas
And rākṣasas and Uragas
Together could not
Have defeated him.

20 As for human beings –
Who would dare even face him?
An infallibly firm fist,
Day and night practice
Of bow-craft –
He was incomparable.

21 It was I who killed him
On the battlefield
For your good.
The Cedi-rājā also
Was disposed of
In front of your eyes.

22 The gods and anti-gods
Together could not
Have defeated him.
I have taken birth
To kill all such
Enemies of the gods,

23 And with your help
Work for the welfare
Of the three worlds.
O lion-among-men!
Bhīma has already killed
Hiḍimba
Baka
And Kirmīra.

24 They were as mighty
As Rāvaṇa himself
And bent on destroying
Brahmins and yajñas.
Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca
Has killed the māyā-weaving
Rākṣasa Alāyudha.

25 It was my ruse
To get Karṇa to use
His *śakti*-missile
To kill Hiḍimbā's son
Ghaṭotkaca.
Had Karṇa not used
The *śakti*-missile
In that mahā-clash,

26 One day or other
I would have had
To kill Ghaṭotkaca.
I did not kill him earlier
Only to please you.

27 This rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca –
He hated Brahmins
And he hated yajñas,
He was a destroyer
Of dharma, he had
A vicious ātman.
So I had him eliminated.

28 O defectless one!
I have manipulated matters
So that the *śakti*-missile
Gifted by Śakra-Indra
Is now ineffective.
Son of Pāṇḍu!
I will destroy all
Who destroy dharma.

29 I have taken an eternal vow
To protect dharma.
Brahma-sacred texts, truth, self-
Control, purity, dharma, humility,
Śrī-prosperity, patience, constancy –

30 Where these are,
There I am.
Their delight
Is my delight.
In all truth
I tell you this.
Do not worry about
Vaikartana-Karṇa.

31 I will show you
The way to kill him.
On the battlefield
Wolf-waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma
Will be the one
To kill Suyodhana-Duryodhana.

32 Son of Pāṇḍu!
I will tell you also
How that is accomplished.
Right now
The field is a mass
Of noisy confusion.

33 Your soldiers are fleeing
In all the ten directions.
The Kauravas have accurately
Targeted their enemies.
That paragon-of-exterminators
Droṇa
Is massacring your soldiers."

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-TWO

1 "If the charioteer's son Karṇa
Had a *śakti*-missile
Intended for a single kill,"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"Why did he target others
And not Pārtha-Arjuna?

2 Arjuna dead, the Pāṇḍavas and
Sṛñjayas would have been destroyed.
Why did he not kill that one hero
And win the war?

3 Arjuna's mahā-vow was:
'Challenged,
I do not show my back.'
The charioteer's son Karṇa
Should have challenged
Phālguna-Arjuna.

4 Tell me, Sañjaya:
What prevented Vṛṣa-Karṇa
From challenging Phālguna-Arjuna
And killing him
With the *śakti*-missile
Gifted by Śakra-Indra?

5 It must be
That my son Duryodhana
Has lost his mind
And has none to help him.
His enemies outwitted him.
Vicious fool!
How will he ever
Overcome his enemies?

6 He had this ultimate
Weapon, a *śakti*
That guaranteed victory.
And he let Vāsudeva-
Krishna trick him
To waste that *śakti*
On Ghaṭotkaca!

7 Like a fruit snatched
From a cripple's hand
By a powerful man,
Krishna snatched victory
From Karṇa by making him
Release that fatal *śakti*
On Ghaṭotkaca.

8 O learned one!
When a dog and a boar fight
It's the hunter who gains.
In the clash between Karṇa
And Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca,
The winner was Vāsudeva-Krishna.

9 'If Ghaṭotkaca
Kills Karṇa,
How wonderful
For the Pāṇḍavas!
And if
Vaikartana-Karṇa
Kills Ghaṭotkaca,
How wonderful
For the Pāṇḍavas! –
No more threatened
By the *śakti*-missile.'

10 That is what must have been
In the mind
Of that lion-among-men
Supremely intelligent
Vāsudeva-Krishna
Who loves the Pāṇḍavas
When he contrived
To have the charioteer's son
Kill Ghaṭotkaca."

11 Knowing the intention
Of Karṇa
(continued Sañjaya),
Madhusūdana-Krishna
Arranged that chariot-clash
Between the rākṣasa-lord

12 Mahā-heroic Ghaṭotkaca
To render futile
That invincible *śakti*-missile.
(Such was the tactic
Of mahā-intelligent
Janārdana-Krishna.)
All this happened, O rājā,
Because you accepted
Wicked advice.

13 O excelling Kaurava!
Had Krishna not protected
Pārtha-Arjuna from
The mahā-chariot-hero Karṇa,
We would have won.

14

O Dhṛtarāṣṭra!
Without the aid of
*Prabhu*-lord
Master-of-yoga
Janārdana-Krishna,
The horses
War-flag and chariot
Of Pārtha-Arjuna
Would have been destroyed.

15

O lord-of-the-earth!
There are so many ways
Krishna protects Arjuna
Making it easy for him
To rout his enemies.

16

How brilliantly Krishna
Saved Pāṇḍava Arjuna
From the invincible *śakti*
Which would have pulverised
Kuntī's son Arjuna like
A thunderbolt shattering a tree.

17

"My son
Thinks he is wise
And is proud of it,"
said Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
"He's quarrelsome.
He listens
To the worst advice.
He has let slip
The chance to kill Arjuna
And win the war.

18

Charioteer!
Why did mahā-intelligent
Well-versed-in-war-weapons
Karṇa fail to fire
The invincible missile
At Dhanañjaya-Arjuna?

19

And you, Gavalgaṇa's son,
What happened to you?
Why did you, who are so mahā-
Intelligent, not remind Karṇa?"

20 Night after night
(replied Sañjaya)
This is all that I
And Duryodhana
And Śakuni
And Duḥśāsana said
And discussed.

21 "Karṇa!
Tomorrow at dawn
Leave everything else,
And kill Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
We will be lords,
The Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas
Our slaves.

22 It's possible,
After Pārtha-Arjuna is killed,
Krishna will set up
And support another Pāṇḍava
In his place.
Well, kill Krishna too.

23 Krishna
is the root
of the Pāṇḍavas
Pārtha-Arjuna
is the trunk
of the Pāṇḍavas
The other Pāṇḍavas
are the branches
of the tree
The Pāñcālas
are the leaves
of the tree.

24 Krishna
is the refuge
of the Pāṇḍavas
Krishna is their strength
Krishna is their leader
Krishna is their central glory
like the moon
among the planets.

25 O Sūta's son Karṇa!
Forget the leaves
Forget the branches
Forget the trunk.
Everywhere and always
Keep the root of the Pāṇḍavas
In mind.
Krishna is the root."

26 O rājā!
Had Karṇa killed
The scion of the Yādavas
Dāśārha-Krishna,
The entire earth
Would have been his.
This goes without saying.

27 If the Yādava-delighter
Mahātma Krishna had been killed,
Then, O Indra-among-men,
This mountain-sea-and-forest-teeming
Earth would have been all yours.

28 We woke every morning
With our minds made up.
But at the time
Of battle,
In front of ever-alert
Lord-of-the-three-worlds
Incomparable
Hṛṣikeśa-Krishna,
We became confused
And forgot our resolve.

29 Keśava-Krishna protected
Arjuna from Rādhā's son
Karṇa by never allowing
Arjuna to expose himself
Before the charioteer's son
On the field of battle.

30 *Prabhu*-lord, Acyuta-Krishna made
Other chariot-heroes face Karṇa
In his ploy to make ineffective
The fatal *śakti*-missile

31 O rājā!
With the finest-of-men
Puruṣottama-Krishna
Protecting Pārtha-Arjuna
From Karṇa
In this manner,
Arjuna had no problem
Of self-defence.

32 Seriously,
Of you ask me,
I can see no one
In the three worlds
Who can defeat
*Cakra*-carrying
Foe-exterminating
Janārdana-Krishna.

33 Truly valiant, lion-among-
Mahā-chariot-heroes Sātyaki
Asked mahā-muscled Krishna
About Karṇa:

34 "*Prabhu!* Lord!
Karṇa had decided
To use his invincible
Śakti-missile
Against Phālguna-Arjuna.
Why did the charioteer's son
Not do so?"

35 Vāsudeva-Krishna replied:
"Duḥśāsana
Karṇa
Śakuni
The Sindu-ruler Jayadratha
As well as Duryodhana –
All said to Karṇa:

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36 ‘Karṇa! Mahā-bowman!
O illustrious one,
Invincible in battle!
O victorious one!
Do not hurl this *śakti*
On anyone,

37 O Karṇa,
Except the mahā-chariot-hero
Kuntī’s son
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
Like Vāsava-Indra
Among the gods,
He is the most illustrious
Among the Pāṇḍavas.

38 With him dead,
The Pāṇḍavas
And the Sṛñjayas
Will be like the gods
Without *agni*-fire
In their mouths.”

39 Bull-brave Śini-hero!
Karṇa said, ‘So be it!’
He gave them his word.
From then on, his one concern
Was how to kill
The Gāṇḍīva-bow-wielder Arjuna.

40 O finest of warriors!
It was I who confused
The son of Rādhā
Which made him hurl
The *śakti*-missile
At white-horsed
Śvetavāhana-Arjuna,
The son of Pāṇḍu.

41 O finest of warriors!
That fact that Phālguna-
Arjuna faced death
From the *śakti*-missile
Made me sleepless
And joyless.

42 O bull-brave Śini-hero!
When I saw the missile
Fired at Ghaṭotkaca,
I knew Dhanañjaya-
Arjuna was saved
From the jaws of death.

43 Not my father
Not my mother
Not my brothers
(You among them)
Not even my own life
Deserves to be protected
On the battlefield
So much as the
Dreadful-deed-doer
Bībhatsu-Arjuna.

44 O Sātvata-Sātyaki!
If there is anything
More precious than
All the three worlds,
I would not want that
If having it was
At the cost of losing
Kuntī's son
Pārtha-Arjuna
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.

45 Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki!
I am so happy today,
So mahā-happy!
I look at Pārtha-Arjuna
And it seems to me
As if he has returned
From the dead.

46 Now you know why
I arranged for the
Rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca
To confront Karṇa.
None else had the power
To match Karṇa
In battle that night."

47 Devakī's son Krishna
(reported Sañjaya)
Who loved Dhananjaya-Arjuna
And wished his welfare
In every way possible,
Said this to Sātyaki.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-THREE

1 "*Tāta*! Dear Sañjaya!"
Dhṛtarāṣṭra said.
"What Karṇa
Duryodhana
Śakuni the son of Subala
And you decided
Was wrong, very wrong.

2 If you knew that the
Single-deadly *śakti*-missile
Could not be repulsed
On the battlefield
Even by all the gods
Led by Vāsava-Indra,

3 Why, Sañjaya, did you
Not advise Karṇa
To use it earlier against
Devakī's son Krishna
Or Phālguna-Arjuna?"

4 O lord of men!
(continued Sañjaya)
O finest of the Kauravas!
Every night we returned
From the battlefield
And discussed
This very matter

5 And kept telling Karṇa:
"Karṇa
At crack of dawn tomorrow
Shoot the *śakti*-missile
At Keśava-Krishna
Or Arjuna."

6 But such is fate,
O rājā!
Come crack of dawn
And something went wrong
With the minds
Of Karṇa
And the other warriors.

7 I think it's fate
That governs everything –
Or why should Karṇa,
*Śakti*-missile in hand,
Refuse to kill
Devakī's son Krishna
Or Pārtha-Arjuna?

8 For there he stood
Holding the *śakti*-missile
As deadly as the pitch-
Black night of doom
Kāla-rātri – yet Karṇa,
Mind blurred by fate,
Did not shoot it

9 Either at Krishna
The son of Devakī
Or at Pārtha-Arjuna
As powerful as Śakra-Indra.
Why? – because deva-māyā
Had muddled his mind.

10 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:
"Yes, indeed
You are victims of fate,
Victims of your own minds,
Victims of Keśava-Krishna.
Vasava-Indra's missile
Has been wasted
On a blade of grass
Called Ghaṭotkaca.

11 That silly act
Will send Karṇa
And my sons and
The other earth-lords
To the realm of Vaivasvata
The lord of death.

12 Anyway, tell me all
About the war's progress
As the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas
Clashed, after the slaughter
Of Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca.

13 What were the war-
Tactics of the war-skilled
Sṛñjaya and Pāñcālas
When in battle-formation
They launched their offensive
Against Droṇa?

14 Enraged by the slaughters
Of Somadatta's son Bhūriśravas
And the Sindhu-ruler Jayadratha,
When Droṇa, ready to sacrifice
His life, attacked the Pāṇḍavas,

15 Like Antaka himself,
The deity of doom,
Mouth agape,
Or like a lion
Horrendously yawning,
What did
The Pāṇḍavas and Sṛñjayas
Do to defend themselves
Against Droṇa?

16 *Tāta*! Dear one!
And Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Karṇa
Kṛpa
Duryodhana and others
Ordered to protect Droṇa –
What did they do?

17 Sañjaya
Describe to me
How my warriors
Attacked Savyasācī-Arjuna
And wolf-waisted
Vṛkodara-Bhīma
Who were determined to kill
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa.

18 Furious at Jayadratha's death,
Furious at Ghaṭotkaca's death,
Each side ready for revenge,
How did the two armies
Battle that night?"

19 O rājā!
(continued Sañjaya)
The slaughter of Ghaṭotkaca
That night by Karṇa
So delighted your soldiers
That they screamed war-cries
And prepared for fresh battle.

20 They attacked the Pāṇḍavas
With murderous ferocity.
That night
Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
Was profoundly depressed.

21 Mahā-muscled Yudhiṣṭhira
Said to Bhīma:
"Mahā-muscled one!
Attack Duryodhana's
Mahā-chariot-heroes
Tonight
While his army
Is re-grouping.

22 The news
Of Ghaṭotkaca's death
Has clouded my mind."
Saying this,
He sat down in his chariot.

23 Tears streamed down
The rājā's cheeks.
He sighed
Again and again.
Karṇa's feat had created
This terrible turmoil
In his mind.

24 Seeing him suffering,
Krishna said to him:
"Kuntī's son,
Don't give in to grief.

25 O excellent Bhārata!
Such grief is for weaklings.
Stand up and fight!
Accept the burden of war!

26 If you waver now,
You will never win."
Hearing these words of Krishna,
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira

27 Wiped the tears
From his eyes
And said:
"Mahā-muscled one!
I know the supreme principle
Of dharma.

28 The man who forgets
The good others do him
Gets the same punishment
As one who kills a Brahmin.
During the period
Of our forest exile,
I know
The mahā-ātmaned son
Of Hiḍimbā,
Ghaṭotkaca,

29 Though only a young boy,
O Janārdana-Krishna,
Did so many things
For our welfare.
Learning that Pāṇḍu's son
White-horsed
Śvetavāhana-Arjuna
Had gone on a mission
To acquire arms,

30 This mahā-bowman,
O Krishna,
Came to meet me
In Kāmyaka,
And stayed with us
Till Dhanañjaya-Arjuna retunred.

31 He was a great help
In our journey to Gandhamādana.
This mahā-ātmaned hero
Carried tired Pāñcālī-
Draupadī on hih back.

32 *Prabhu*! Lord!
From the day
The war began,
He has helped me
In every way.
He has performed
Astounding feats
In the mahā-war.

33 Janārdana-Krishna!
I have a natural love
For Sahadeva.
For the Indra-among-rākṣasas
Ghaṭotkaca
I have the same love.

34 Krishna of the Vṛṣṇis!
Mahā-muscled Ghaṭotkaca
Was my bhakta.
I loved him, he loved me.
My grief and confusion
Are because of him.

35 Krishna of the Vṛṣṇis!
Look how the Kauravas
Are decimating my army!
Look how the mahā-chariot-heroes
Droṇa and Karṇa
Are showing their war-skills!

36 Like two rutting elephants
Trampling
A wilderness of weeds,
Their armies are trampling
The Pāṇḍava ranks
In the middle of the night.

37 O Mādhava-Krishna!
Despite Bhīma's physical strength,
Despite Arjuna's war-skills,
The Kauravas are routing us.

38 Karṇa and Droṇa and
Suyodhana-Duryodhana
Are roaring their victory-cries
Over the corpse of the rākṣasa.

39 Janārdana-Krishna!
You alive –
And we alive –
And Hiḍimbā's son
Ghaṭotkaca dead
At the hands of
The charioteer's son Karṇa –
How did that happen?

40 O Krishna!
In front of the eyes
Of ambidexterous
Savyasācī-Arjuna,
Hiḍimbā's son Ghaṭotkaca
Was murdered.
We should be ashamed.

41 When Abhimanyu
Was murdered by Duryodhana,
The ill-ātmaned son
Of Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
Savyasācī-Arjuna was not present.

42 The Sindhu-ruler
Ill-ātmaned Jayadratha
Effectively blocked us;
Droṇa and his son
Aśvatthāman conspired
In that heinous murder.

43 It was guru Droṇa
Who showed Karṇa
The way to kill Abhimanyu.
When Abhimanyu was fighting
With supraised sword,
It was Droṇa who sliced
The sword in two.

44 And while Abhimanyu
Was trapped like this,
Like a heartless butcher
Kṛtavarman first
Killed his horses
And then cut down
His two flank-protectors.

45 Then the other brilliant bowmen
Pounced on Subhadrā's son
And slaughtered him.
Krishna, the involvement
Of the Sindhu-ruler
Was minimal, yet Gāṇḍīva-
Bow-wielding Arjuna killed

46 Jayadratha.
O finest of the Yādavas!
I was not very pleased
By this deed of his.
If the killing of their
Enemies by the Pāṇḍavas
Can be justified,

47 Then Karṇa and Droṇa
Should be the first
To be eliminated.
That is what I think.
O bull-among-men! They are
The root of our misery.

48 They are the two
Who bolster the hopes
Of Suyodhana-Duryodhana.
It was Droṇa
Who deserved to die,
It was the charioteer's son
Karṇa who deserved to die –

49 Instead mahā-muscled Arjuna
Went and killed Jayadratha
The ruler of the Sindhus,
A remote accomplice!
O brave one!
I will make it
My special mission
To kill the charioteer's son.

50 I will fight
To see him dead.
Elsewhere on the field,
Mahā-muscled Bhīma
Will take on Droṇa."

51 Saying this,
Yudhiṣṭhira stretched
His massive bow taut,
Blew his fearful conch,
And drove swiftly away.

52 With one thousand chariots,
Three hundred elephants,
Five thousand horses,
Supported by the Pāñcālas
And Prabhadrakas,

53 Śikhaṇḍin followed,
Protecting rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
From the rear.
Drums were beaten
And conches blown
By the armour-clad

54 Pāñcāla and Pāṇḍava warriors
Comprising Yudhiṣṭhira's front.
Mahā-muscled Vāsudeva-Krishna
Said to Dhanañjaya-Arjuna:

55 "In a fit of anger
Yudhiṣṭhira has decided
To attack and kill
The charioteer's son
Karṇa.
It will be a mistake
To let him go alone."

56 Instantly
Hṛṣikeśa-Krishna
Urged the horses forward.
Though rājā Yudhiṣṭhira
Had gone far ahead,
Janārdana-Krishna
Kept pace.

57 Confused with burning
Anger and grief,
Yudhiṣṭhira advanced
Propelled by the desire
To kill the charioteer's son.
Seeing this, suddenly

58 Vyāsa appeared before
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
And said:
"It is our great good luck
That Phālguna-Arjuna
Has survived repeated
Clashes with Karṇa.

59 Karṇa cherished
His *śakti*-missile
In order to kill
Savyasācī-Arjuna.
Good that so far
In this mahā-war
Jiṣṇu-Arjuna has not
Had to face a chariot-
Duel with Karṇa.

60 That would have made both
Exhaust their divine missiles.
In desperation, the charioteer's son
Would have fired the *śakti*-missile

61 Given to him
By Vāsava-Indra.
O Yudhiṣṭhira,
Finest of the Bharatas,
That for you
Would have been
A fearsome calamity.

62 O bestower of honour!
You are fortunate indeed
That the rākṣasa
Has been killed
On the battlefield.
It was Kāla who killed
The rākṣasa –
Vāsava-Indra's *śakti*-missile
Was only the instrument.

63 O excelling Bharata!
He died for your good.
Show no anger.
Feel no grief.

64 Yudhiṣṭhira,
The truth is:
All life ends in death.
Join hands
With your brother,
Join hands
With the mahātmā earth-lords –

65 And then,
O Bharata rājā,
Fight the Kauravas.
On this fifth day of battle,
The world
Will be yours.

66 O lion-among-men!
Always, O Pāṇḍava,
Keep dharma in mind –
And non-injury and gentleness
And tapasyā and charity
And forgiveness
And truth.

67 Where dharma is,
Victory is."
Saying this
To Pāṇḍu's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Vyāsa disappeared
In a flash.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-FOUR

1 O bull-brave Bharata!
(continued Sañjaya)
Heroic Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
Listened to Vyāsa's advice
And stopped thinking
Of killing Karṇa.

2 The death of Ghaṭotkaca
At the hands of the
Charioteer's son that night
Had plunged Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
Into grief and anger.

3 Seeing your reeming army
Kept in check
By Bhīma,
He ordered Dhṛṣṭadyumna:
"Stop jar-born Droṇa
From advancing.

4 O foe-exterminator!
You took birth
From the sacred fire,
Equipped with arrows,
Coat-of-mail, sword and bow,
To destroy Droṇa.

5 So smile – shed fear
And attack Droṇa.
Janamejaya, Śikhaṇḍin,
Durmukha's son Yaśodhara–

6 Let them also attack jar-born
Droṇa from all sides.
Nakula, Sahadeva, Draupadī's
Five sons, the Prabhadrakas,

7 Drupada and Virāṭa
With their sons and brothers,
Sātyaki, Kekaya,
Pāṇḍu's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna –

8 They will attack also
To kill jar-born Droṇa.
Chariot-heroes, elephant-riders
And horsemen,

9 Along with foot-soldiers,
Will unite to topple
The mahā-chariot hero Droṇa.
Ordered by the mahā-ātmaned
Son of Pāṇḍu, Yudhiṣṭhira,

10 All these heroes
Combined to launch
Their fierce strategy
To kill Droṇa.
Even as the Pāṇḍavas
Advanced swiftly
And courageously,

11 Weapons-expert Droṇa
Faced them headlong
On the field of battle.
Rājā Duryodhana,
With every means,
Attacked the Pāṇḍavas

12 Wrathfully,
In order to protect
The life of Drona.
A fierce clash
Between exhausted animals
And warriors
Took place

13 Involving
The Kaurava
And Pāṇḍava armies.
Mahārāja!
Battle-weary,
Near-collapse
From loss of sleep,

14 The mahā-chariot-heroes
Did not know
What to do.
The three-watch
Nine-hour night
Became a fiendish

15 Thousand-watch
Interminable
Life-devouring
Experience.
Mangling
Mutilating
Murdering

16 Their sleep-heavy eyes
Closed at midnight –
A host of depressed
And shattered
Kṣatriyas
Of their army
And yours.

17 Their stock of arrows
And other weapons
Was exhausted.
Unable to fight,
Yet ashamed not to fight,

18 They observed
The dharma of warriors
And did not desert
Or flee;
Bleary with sleeplessness,
They laid aside
Their weapons,
And closed their eyes
And slept,

19 O Bharata,
In chariots,
On elephant-back,
On horse-back.
O lord of men!
They lay unmoving,

20 And one by one
Were despatched
By other warriors
To the realm of Yama
The god of death.
Some were killed
As they lay there
Dreaming, helpless.

21 On that terrible field
Of war-butchery,
Some mumbled incoherently,
Some attacked themselves,
Some drowsily slew
Their own comrades,
Some their enemies.

22 Mahārāja!
Some of our soldiers,
Eyes red and drooping,
Stood stiffly on the field
Thinking: *I have to fight.*

23 Some heroic warriors
Drowsily roamed
The battlefield
Blindly killing other warriors
In the pitch-dark night.

24 Many were so soporific
With sleeplessness
They did not even know
Who came near them
On the battlefield
And put an end to their life.

25 O bull-among-men!
Seeing their plight,
Dreadful-deed-doing
Bībhatsu-Arjuna shouted
At the top of his voice:

26 "You are tired and sleepy,
Your animals are tired and sleepy.
Darkness and dust
Have obscured your ranks.

27 Sleep, soldiers,
If you want to,
Stop fighting! Briefly
Lie down on the field.

28 At moonrise,
Having slept and rested,
Fight again,
O Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas!"

29 O lord of the earth!
The words of dharma-
Following Arjuna pleased
All the dharma-knowing warriors.
They said to one another,

30 Loudly:
"Karṇa! Karṇa!"
"Duryodhana!
Stop fighting!
The Pāṇḍava soldiers
Have stopped
Their attacks."

31 O Bharata!
It was at the loud
Insistence of Phalguna-Arjuna
That the Pāṇḍavas
And your soldiers
Stopped fighting.

32 This excellent advice
Of mahā-ātmaned Arjuna
Earned the pūjā-praise
Of gods and ṛṣis
And the delighted soldiers.

33 O bul-brave Bhārata!
O Bharata-descendant!
O rājā! Gratefully
And respectfully
With pūjā-praise
The soldiers accepted
The gentle suggestion
Of Arjuna,
And slept briefly.

34 O Bharata!
Happily, briefly,
Your soldiers slept,
After offering pūjā-praise
To valiant Arjuna,
Saying:

35 “O mahā-muscled one!
O defectless one!
You have knowledge
Of the Vedas
And you have knowledge
Of war-weapons.
You have dharma,
You have compassion
For all creatures.

36 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
May you prosper!
You have comforted us.
May you achieve whatever
You dearly desire.”

37 O lord of men!
Fulsomely praising Arjuna;
Your lions-among-men
Mahā-chariot-heroes
Slipped into sleep,
And were silent.

38 Some slept on the backs
Of horses,
Some on elephants,
Some in chariot-boxes,
Some on the bare earth.

39 Elsewhere, separately,
All over the battlefield
They slept, holding swords
And maces and lances,
Some in coats-of-mail.

40 The dust-coated snake-like
Trunks of drowsy elephants
Heaved noisily, cooling the earth
With their exhaled breaths.

41 They lay on the field,
Breathing deeply,
These drowsy elephants –
And they looked awesome,
Like a cluster of mountains
On whose slopes slither
Hissing serpents.

42 And gold-caparisoned horses
With thick manes flowing
Along their chariot-harnesses,
Pawed the field continuously,
Pitting it and rutting it.

43 O Indra-among-rājās!
O bull-brave Bharata!
All of them slept,
Still yoked to their chariots.
Mahā-fatigued
Horses and elephants
And soldiers
Slept . . . .

44 Dead tired,
The warriors of both armies
Slept – looking
Like people
In a painting
By a skilful painter.

45 All those young Kṣatriyas
With beautiful earrings,
Their bodies lacerated
With arrow wounds,
Lay sprawled on the two
Forehead globes of
Their elephants, like
Lovers on the breasts
Of beloveds.

46 White as the cheeks
Of a lovely young girl,
The eye-delighting lord-
Of-the-lotuses, the moon,
Rose in the Māhendrī-east.

47 Like a lion
With yellow mane
Glittering like moonbeams,
The moon rose
On the Udaya mountain
As if emerging
From a cave,
And dispelled the darkness
That huddled on the field
Like a herd
Of elephants.

48 The moon rose –
The lily-loving moon –
The moon as white
As the flanks
Of Hara-Śiva's bull Nandi –
As white as the bow
Of Smara-Kāma the god of love –
As sweet and shy as the smile
Of a bashful bride.

49 And in a few moments
The hare-symbolled
Radiant Moon Bhagavān
Became slightly reddish
And gave its first darshan
Of growing refulgence.

50 Then, slowly,
A nimbus of light
Seemed to expand
Around the moon
Like a golden glow.

51 Then the rays
Of the radiant moon
Dispelled the darkness
On earth, in the sky,
In all the directions,

52 And suddenly the world
Was flooded with light
And there was not a speck
Of darkness anywhere.

53 O rājā!
It was as if
Daylight had come.
Some night-creatures
Began roaming about,
But others remained unseen.

54 O rājā!
Like day-depening
*śatapatra*-lotuses
Blossoming when caressed
By sunrays,
All the soldiers
Awoke when caressed
By the light of the moon.

55 Like ocean waves
Heaving and swelling
At moonrise,
The hosts of soldiers
Awoke and arose
In tumult.

57 O lord of men!
Once again
That gory battle
Commenced between
Warriors eager to reach
The other world
After the annihilation
Of this.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-FIVE

1 In a fit of anger
(continued Sañjaya)
Duryodhana said to Droṇa,
Simultaneously delighting
And infuriating him:

2 "No dedicated enemies,
No matter how tired and depressed,
Should ever be allowed
The luxury of respite or rest.

3 We showed them this mecy
Only because you are dear to us.
The trouble is – the Pāṇḍavas
Now are stronger than before.

4 And our energy and strength
Have diminished. Protected by you,
The Pāṇḍavas
Go from strength to strength.

5 All the divine missiles
Including the Brāhma-missile
And how to operate them –
Are known to you.

6 I tell you this truly –
Neither the Pāṇḍavas, nor us,
Nor any bowman in the world,
Can equal your excellence.

7 O all-weapons-expert finest-
Of the-twiceborn! You can kill
Gods, anti-gods, Gandharvas – all –
With your celestial weapons.

8 The Pāṇḍavas fear you.
You keep forgiving them.
They are your disciples –
Maybe that's why.
Or maybe
It's just my bad luck."

9 O rājā!
Inspired and angered
By Duryodhana's words,
Droṇa said:

10 "Duryodhana!
I am getting old,
Yet I use all my śakti
On the battlefield.
Because you want to win,
You want me to use ignoble means.

11 Your warriors know nothing
About celestial weapons. I do.
I do not know what you think
Is moral or immoral,

12 But, O Kaurava,
What you want me to do,
I will do –
And not otherwise.
I'll show my prowess
On the battlefield
And kill the Pāñcālas.

13 I will not take off
My coat-of-mail
Till I do so.
I swear this inall truth.
You think
Kuntī's son Arjuna
Is battle-weary.

14 O mahā-muscled Kaurava!
Let me tell you
About his valour.
Gods and Gandharvas
Yakṣas
And rākṣasas

15 Cannot defeat ambidexterous
Savyasācī-Arjuna
On the battlefield
Once his anger is roused.
He fought the lord-
Of-the-gods Indra himself
During the burning
Of the Khāṇḍava-forest.

16 In fact, the mahā-ātmaned hero
Extinguished the fire
With his volleys of arrows.
Yakṣas
Daityas
Nāgas
And others
Proud of their strength

17 Were killed by that Indra-
Among-men. You know this.
He routed Citrasena and other
Gandharvas at Ghoṣayātrā.

18 That formidable bowman
Freed on from captivity
In Gandharva hands.
The enemies of the gods,
The Nivātakavacas,

19 Whom even the gods
Could not kill in battle,
Were defeated
By heroic Arjuna.
Thousands of Dānavas
Living in their golden city,

20 Were defeated
By that lion-among-men.
How can mere humans
Face him? You have seen
With your own eyes your army

21 Routed, O lord of the earth,
By Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna."
All this praise of Arjuna
Infuriated

22 Your son Duryodhana,
O rājā,
And he said to Droṇa:
"I and Duḥśāsana
And Karṇa as well as
Our maternal uncle Śakuni

23 Will divide our army
Into two formations
And kill Arjuna today.
You can stand still and watch,
O mahā-muscled Droṇa, since
Your pupil is so dear to you."
Bharadvāja's son
Droṇa smiled and said

24 Encouraging: "*Savasti*!
May you prosper!
Then, he turned
And said again
To rājā Duryodhana:

25 "Show me the Kṣatriya
Who can fight and kill
The radiantly valiant
Gāṇḍīva-wielding
Never-deteriorating
Arjuna!
O bull-among-Kṣatriyas!
Not lord-of-riches Kubera
Not Indra
Not Yama
Not lord-of-the-waters Varuna

26 Not the anti-gods
Not the rākṣasas
Can destroy weapons-ready Arjuna.
O Bharata! Your words
Are the words of a fool.

27 Who returns home unharmed
After facing Arjuna on the field?
You suspect all, you are cruel,
You have evil plans.

28 That is why you speak
The way you do
Even with those
Who wish you well.
Go Kill Arjuna quickly
For your welfare.

29 You are a Kṣatriya
Of a respected family.
I know
You are eager to fight.
Why do you want
All these blameless Kṣatriyas
To be cut down also?

30 You are the root
Of this enmity.
You go and fight
Arjuna if you must.
Your maternal uncle Śakuni
Learned in Kṣatriya-dharma
Is here.

31 Son of Gāndhārī!
You should order him
Who is so expert
In cheating at dice
To battle Arjuna.
Skilled dice-thrower,
Devious,
Unscrupulous,

32 This crooked gambler
Is just the one
Who will finish off
The Pāṇḍavas!
Remember the time
When you and Karṇa
Ecstatically and

33 Stupidly boasted
In front of Dhṛtarāṣṭra:
'*Tātā*! Dear father!
I and Karṇa
And my brother Duḥśāsana–

34 The three of us together,
A united team,
Will kill all
The sons of Pāṇḍu
On the battlefield!'
In assembly after assembly
This is what I
Have heard you boast.

35 Keep you promise now!
Show as the truth
Of your words –
All three of you!
Facing you fearlessly
Is Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna.

36 Do what is expected of you
By Kṣatriya-dharma.
Die rather than be defeated!
You have given much,
You have enjoyed much,
Relished wealth and fame,

37 You have done all
That needed to be done,
You have no debts.
So why fear?
Face Arjuna!
Fight Arjuna!"
Saying this,
Droṇa turned away
From the battlefield.
The Kaurava army
Divided in two formations,
And the battle began.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-SIX

1 O lord of the earth!
Three-fourths of the night
Passed; and the exulting
And hopeful Kauravas and
Pāṇḍavas began battling again.

2 Aruṇa the Dawn
The Sun's charioteer
Appeared,
Stealing the glory
Of the moon
And casting a copper-red glow
On the sky.

3 Aruṇa the Dawn
The Sun's charioteer
Brightened
Till the Sun's maṇḍala
Became
An *aruṇa*-red orb.

4 All the Kaurava
And Pāṇḍava warriors
Left their horses, chariots
And man-borne vehicles
And facing the sun
Offered *saṁdhyā*-
Chanting japa-mantras.

5 Droṇa, heading the formation
That marched in front
Of Duryodhana's formation
Of the bifurcated army,
Launched an attack against
The Somakas, Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas.

6 Seeing the two formations
Of the Kaurava army,
Mādhava-Krishna said
To Arjuna:
"Keep Droṇa on your right,
The others on your left."

7 Acting on Mādhava-Krishna's
Advice, Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Swerved; the mahā-bowman
Manoeuvred to Karṇa and Droṇa's left.

8 Respecting Krishna's strategy,
Subduer-of-hostile-cities Bhima
Drove up to Arjuna at the head
Of his soldiers and said:

9 "Arjuna! Arjuna!
Dreadful-deed-doer
Bībhatsu-Arjuna!
Listen to me.
The time for which
Kṣatriya mothers give birth
To sons, has come.

10 If you don't seize
This chance to show
Yourself the way
To valiant fame,
You will lose
All respect from us,
You will be hurting us.

11 O finest of warriors!
With your valour today,
Pay your debt to
Truth, Prosperity, Dharma, Fame!
Slice your foes, keeping them on
Your right, yourself on the left."

12 O rājā!
(continued Sañjaya)
Inspired by Bhīma
And Keśava-Krishna,
Ambidexterous Savyasācī-Arjuna
Swept through the ranks
Of Droṇa and Karṇa
As advised.

13 As brave Arjuna advanced,
Massacring bull-brave Kṣatriyas,
These bull-strong Kṣatriyas,
Despite all their valour,

14 Were unable
To prevent the assault,
For he was like
An irresistible fire
On a rampage.
Duryodhana
Karṇa
And Subala's son Śakuni

15 Drenched Kuntī's
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
With an arrow-shower.
That finest of warriors,
Well-versed-in-all-war-weapons,
Repulsed the arrows.

16 Fired by his foes,
O Indra-among-rājās,
And replied
With a fierce counter-shower.
Sense-controlled,
Versatile and agile,
He baffled all
Their weapons.

17 He wounded his foes
With ten arrows each.
Clouds of dust arose,
Shrouding the sky.
Arrows fell
Shower after shower.

18 A thick darkness
Covered all.
Mahā-fearful noises
Reverberated.
Neither sky
Nor earth
Nor any of the ten directions
Was visible.

19 The dust raised
By battling warriors
Made everyone blind
And confused.
O raja!
Neither we nor our foes
Could make out who was who.

20 Only by calling out
Each other's names could
The rājā's continue fighting.
O rājā! Uncharioted chariot-
Heroes collided and grappled,

21 Tearing each other's hair,
Clawing at arms
And coats-of-mail.
Their horses butchered,
Their charioteers killed,
Their efforts crushed,
Many chariot-heroes,

22 Though alive,
Looked more dead
Than alive.
Butchered horses
And their slaughtered riders
Lay on hill-
Huge elephants –

23 A mass
Of lifeless flesh.
Driving
To the northern corner
Of the field
Of battle,

24 Droṇa stood,
Like a dazzling
Pillar of fire.
O lord of men!
Seeing him at
That corner of the field,

25 The ranks
Of the Pāṇḍavas
Began to waver –
For he was magnificent,
He was Śrī-radant,
He was energy aflame –

26 Such was Droṇa,
O Bharata,
Whom they saw.
And some stood still, depressed,
And some fled.
Droṇa stood there,
Like a rutting elephant,
Challenging his foes,

27 And none dared
Face him –
Like the Dānavas
Unable to face
Vāsava-Indra.

28 Some were awe-struck,
Some were furious,
Some rubbed their palms,
Some bit their lips

29 In anger,
Some brandished
Their weapons,
Others twanged their bows
And flexed the muscles
Of their arms.

30 And some mahā-brave
And reckless heroes
Swooped on Droṇa
Though harassed by Droṇa,
The Pāñcālas fought on.

31 O Indra-among-rājās!
They suffered intensely
But they kept fighting.
Virāṭa and Drupada
Pressed against Droṇa
On the battlefield

32 As that difficult-ot-defeat
Hero began attacking.
O lord of men!
The three grandsons
Of Drupada

33 And the brilliant bowmen
Of the Cedis launched
An attack on Droṇa.
With three sharp arrows,
The three grandsons of Drupada

34 Were toppled dead by Droṇa,
Who next defeated
The Cedis, Kekayas
And Sṛñjayas.

35 The maha-chariot-hero
Son of Bharadvāja,
Droṇa targeted the Matsyas next.
Enraged Drupada
Fired a volley of arrows

36 At Droṇa,
O mahārāja,
As did Virāṭa.
Foe-exterminating Droṇa
Repulsed that volley

37 And shrouded
Drupada and Virāṭa
With his own arrow-shower.
Obscured by Droṇa's arrows,
In a fit of anger

38 The two heroes launched
Another fierce attack.
Mahārāja!
Not outdone,
Enraged Droṇa.

39 Shattered both their bows
With two sharp
*Bhalla*-arrows.
Virāṭa, incensed,
Retaliated with
Ten *tomara*-javelins

40 And ten arrows
With the aim
Of killing Droṇa.
Filled with wrath,
Drupada aimed
A gold-worked fierce
*Śakti*-spear,

41 Sleek and shiny
Like the body
Of an Indra-among-snakes,
At Droṇa.
Disintegrating with
*Bhalla*-arrows
Those ten *tomara*-lances,

42 Droṇa also shattered
The gold-and-cat's-eye-gemmed
*Śakti*-spear
With his arrows.
With two excellently
Sharpened *bhalla*-arrows,
Droṇa

43 Sent Virāṭa and Drupada
To the realm of death.
With the deaths of
Virāṭa
Drupada
The Kekayas

44 The Cedis
The Matsyas
The Pāñcālas
And the three
Heroic grandsons
Of Drupada –
All slaughtered –

45 Mahā-minded Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Appalled by this deed
Of Droṇa,
Burning with grief and anger,
Vowed before
His chariot-heroes:

46 "The man who today
Flees from Droṇa
Or is defeated by Droṇa –
Let that man lose
All his *iṣṭāpūrta*,
All the merits of
His sacred deeds,
Let that man lose
His Kṣatriya-hood
Or his Brahmin-hood."

47 Vowing this in the midst
Of all the bowman
The Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Attacked Droṇa with his army.

48 The Pāñcālas attacked Droṇa
From one front,
The Pāṇḍavas from another.
Duryodhana
Karṇa
Subala's son Śakuni

49 And Duryodhana's brothers
Were protecting Droṇa
On the battlefield.
However hard they tried,
The Pāñcālas were unable
Even to get a glimpse
Of Droṇa protected by
Those mahā-chariot-heroes.

50 O noble lord!
Infuriated
With Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Bull-brave Bhīma
Spoke these harsh words
To him:

51 "What kind of man is this,
Born in Drupada's family,
Well-versed in all war-weapons,
Who is respected as a Kṣatriya,
Who stands in front of his foe
Doing nothing?

52 What kind of man is this
Who has seen his father
And his son butchered,
Who has made vows
Before an assembly of rājās,
Who stands in front of his foe
Doing nothing?

53 There,
In front of you,
Is Droṇa –
Like a blazing fire
Fuelled by his bow and arrows –
Incinerating Kṣatriyas
With his incandescence!

55 It will not be long
Before he consumes
All the Pāṇḍava forces.
Before he does that,
I will attack him.
Stand and watch
While I attack Droṇa!"

55 With those words,
Wolf waisted Vṛkodara-Bhīma
In a burst of anger
Pierced Droṇa's ranks
Creating havoc
With arrows fired
From his fully taut bow.

56 O rājā!
The Pāñcāla prince
Dhṛṣṭadyumna also
With his army
Attacked Droṇa.
A gory battle took place.

57 O rājā!
Never had we seen
And never heard
Of a battle so fierce
As the one that raged
When the sun rose
On the battlefield.

58 O lord of men!
Chariots collided
With chariots
In tangled masses;
Corpses lay strewn
On the battlefield.

59 Some, fleeing,
Were intercepted
And slaughtered;
Others running in panic
Were wounded
In their backs,
Others all over their bodies.

60 So the battle raged
In incredible fury
And confusion
Till it was time
For the sun to rise
At *saṁdhyā*.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-SEVEN

1 Mahārāja!
(continued Sañjaya)
Clad in armour
The warriors revered
The thousand-rayed Sun
At dawn-*saṁdhyā*.

2 The thousand-rayed Sun
Rose, illuminating with gold
The worlds,
And in the dawn-light
The battle raged afresh.

3 O Bharata!
Before sunrise,
They fought;
After sunrise,
The same soldiers fought again.

4 Horsemen clashed
with chariot-heroes
Elephants clashed
with horsemen
Footsoldiers clashed
with elephants
Horses with horses
Foot-soldiers with foot-soldiers.

5 O bull-brave Bhārata!
Chariot-heroes clashed
with chariot-heroes
Elephants with elephants . . .
Singly and collectively
They clashed and toppled
On the battlefield.

6 Exhausted after
The previous night's battle,
Struck by the heat
Of the newly risen sun,
Each part of their body
Aching with hunger and thirst
They moved about in a daze.

7 Conches
*Bheri*-kettledurms
*Mṛdaṅga*-drumss
Elephants trumpeting
The twanging
Of fully stretched bows –

8 The noise,
O bull-brave Bharata,
O rājā,
Reverberated to the skies.
The din
Of running soldiers.
Falling weapons,

9 Neighing horses,
Rattling chariots
Wheeling and swerving,
Screaming warriors –
It was *tumulum-mahat*,
Mahā-tumultuous!

10 Gradually swelling,
That tumultuous noise
Of mahā-intensity
Reached the realm
Of heaven itself.
The wails and screams
Of mutilated soldiers –

11 The mahā-agony
Of the falling and the fallen
Filled the earth.
It was a pitiful sight –
Mangled foot-soldiers,
Horses, chariot-heroes,
Elephants . . .

12 In that fearful chaos
Warriors of both sides
Killed their own comrades.
Friend slew friend,
Relative slew relative.

13 Like clothes laid out
To dry on washing grounds,
Weapons hurled
By combatants
On other warriors
And elephants
Lay in scattered heaps

14 The swish
Of upraised
And striking swords
In the hands of heroes
Was like the swish
Struck on slabs
For washing.

15 It was horrible,
It was terrible,
Too gruesome for words,
The battle that went on
In a part of the field
Involving twin-bladed swords,
Scimitars, *tomara*-javelins,
*Paraśva*-hatchets –

16 The blood of elephants and horses
its flow –
The corpses of warriors
its eddies –
The multitudinous weapons
its fish –
Marrow and fat its weeds –

17 Agonising wails its rippling –
Floating pennants its foam –
Such was the river on the field
That flowed to the realm of death.

18 Riddled with arrows,
Exhausted after
The night's clashes,
Dazed and depressed,
Pierced with śakti-spears,
Horses and elephants
And other mounts
Stood on the field,
As if paralysed.

[VII:187:19-24]

Transcreated by P. Lal

19 The field was a
Picturesque spectacle
Of chopped arms
And decapitated heads
Of earringed warriors
Slain in battle.

20 Choked with dead
And half-dead bodies
And hordes of scavenging beasts,
There was no space left
For chariots to pass.

21 Chariot-wheels stuck
In the bloody slush,
The panting and tired
Arrow-laerated horses
Bravely kept pulling –

22 Noble-breed horses,
Confident and strong,
And as huge as elephants.
O Bharata!
Agitated
Confused
Frightened
Wounded

23 Were all the warriors
Except Droṇa and Arjuna.
They were
The refuge
Of all in their armies
Who were wounded
And suffering.

24 But enemies
Who faced them
Were speedily despatched
To the realm of Vaivasvata
The god of death.
The mahā-army
Of the Kauravas
Was so entangled

25 With the ranks
Of the Pāñcālas
That none could distinguish
Who was who.
The battlefield became
The playground of Antaka
The deity of doom
Where cowards quaked.

26 A mahā killing ground
Of royally born Kṣatriyas!
Karṇa, Droṇa,
Arjuna, Yudhiṣṭhira,

27 Bhīma
The twins
Nakula-and-Sahadeva
The Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Sātyaki
Duḥśāsana
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Duryodhana
Subala's son Śakuni

28 Kṛpa
The Madra-rājā Śalya
Kṛtavarman
Others
Myself –
All became indistinguishable –
Even the earth and the quarters.

29 Such was the thick dust
That rose from the clashing armies.
In that dust-cloud created
By the tumultuous battle,

30 It seemed
A second night
Had descended.
The Kauravas
The Pāñcālas
The Pāṇḍavas
Could not be distinguished –

31 Nor the quarters
The ten directions
The sky
The earth
The ups and downs
Of the landscape.
Whatever the hand
Touched,
Whatever the hand
Sensed,
Whatever the hand
Graped –
Whether
One's own
Or someone else's –

32 Was instantly struck
And slain
By the warrior
Whose sole desire
Was to win.
A strong wind
Blue the dust away
High up.
Swirls of dust
Fell on the field
And mixed
With the blood,

33 And the field
Of battle
Became a calm level
Sheet of blood-dust.
Elephants
Horses
Chariot-warriors
Foot-soldiers

34 Dripping blood
Looked as lovely
As a forest
Full of crimson-
Flowering *pārijāta*
Coral trees.
Duryodhana
Karṇa
Droṇa
Duḥśāsana –

35 These four chariot-heroes
Battled with
Four Pāṇḍava brothers.
Duryodhana and his brothers
Fought the twins
Nakula and Sahadeva.

36 Rādhā's son Karṇa fought
Vṛkodara-Bhīma; Arjuna fought
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa. All watched
The fierce and wondrous clashes.

37 The wonderful battles
Of the wonderful warriors
In wonderful manoeuvres
On wonderful chariots
Of bull-brave chariot-heroes
In that superhuman war

38 Were witnessed
By all the chariot-heroes
On both sides.
Each yearning
For victory,
Each determined
To defeat his foe,

39 They rained arrows
On each other
Like showers
In the monsoon.
The bull-brave heroes,
In their chariots
Of solar splendour,

40 Looked as enchanting
As clouds sailing
In an autumn sky.
Mahārāja!
Driven by wrath
And revenge,
Those warriors,

41 Brilliant bowmen all,
Brandishing mahā-bows,
Attacked each other
Like musth leaders
Of two herds
Of elephants.

42 O rājā!
Until the end comes,
The body somehow survives.
Which must be the reason
Why so many mahā-chariot-heroes,
Badly bruised and bloodied,
Continued to fight somehow . . . .

43 Chopped off
Arms and legs,
Heads graced
With earrings,
Bows
Arrows
*Prāsa*-barbed-darts
*Khaṅga*-swords
*Paraśu*-axes
*Paṭṭisa*-three-pointed-spears

44 *Nālīka*-arrows
Short *nārāca*-arrows
*Śakti*-spears
*Tomara*-javelins
And a variety
Of other weapons
Of varied shapes
And sizes
Well-polished
And oiled

45 Wonderful
coats-of-mail
of varied shapes
Shattered
chariots
Corpses
of elephants
and horses

46 Warrior-less
And flag-less
chariots
like huge
empty cities
Dragged
by panicking horses

47 At wind-swift speeds . . .
Ornament-adorned warriors
Palm-leaf fans
Coats-of-mail
War-flags

48 Umbrellas
Decorations
Uniforms
Fragrant flower-garlands
Jewelled necklaces
Diadems
Crowns
Turbans
Tinkling *kiṅkiṇi*-bells

49 Jewels that graced
The chests
Of horses
Golden *niṣkas*
That graced
Their necks
Gems that graced
Their heads –
Bespangled the field
Like scintillating stars
Beautifying the sky.

[VII:187:50-55]

Transcreated by P. Lal

50 Next came the clash
Between Duryodhana
And Mādrī's son Nakula,
Both boiling with wrath
And revenge.

51 Keeping your son
Duryodhana on his right,
Mādrī's son Nakula
Delightdly pinned him down
With hundreds of arrows.
Mahā-applause
And noisy chaos followed.

52 Forced to the right
By his consin-brother,
Your son Duryodhana
Was furious with anger
At being out-manoeuvred
To a disadvantage,
But continued
To fight back.

53 Mahārāja!
Your son
Rājā Duryodhana
Tried to manoeuvre
Nakula to his right.
Seeing what your son
Was trying to do,

54 Nakula,
Expert-in-war-weapons,
Energetic Nakula,
Successfully stopped him
With showers of arrow-nets
From all sides.

55 All the warriors praised
Nakula's tactic.
Recalling the sufferings
Inflicted as a result
Of your wicked counsel,
Nakula shouted to your son:
"Wait! Stay where you are!"

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-EIGHT

1 Riding a chariot
Whose speed
Made the earth shake,
Angry Duḥśāsana
(continued Sañjaya)
Attacked Sahadeva.

2 Seeing him speeding,
Foe-annihilating Sahadeva
Sliced the helmeted head
Of Duḥśāsana's charioteer
With a *bhalla*-arrow.

3 It was so swift –
The decapitation –
That neither Duḥśāsana
Nor anyone else
Realised that Sahadeva
Had severed
The charioteer's head.

4 The reins hanging loose,
The horses ran wild
All over the field –
That was when Duḥśāsana
Realised his charioteer
Had been killed.

5 A skilled equestrain,
Duḥśāsana took control
Of the speeding steeds.
That finest of chariot-heroes
Continued to fight
With brilliant expertise.

6 Fearlessly he traversed
The field of battle and
Received the pūjā-praise
Of friend and foe alike.

7 But Sahadeva rained such
A fierce volley of arrows
That the afflicted horses
Took flight.

8 To steady the horses,
Duḥśāsana was compelled
To lay down his bow,
And hold the reins;
And when they steadied,
He picked up his bow
And continued the battle.

9 Seizing this opportunity,
Mādrī's son Sahadeva
Riddled Duḥśāsana
With arrows.
It was at this time
That Karṇa stepped in
To protect your son.

10 But wolf-waisted
Vṛkodara-Bhīma,
Stretching his bow ear-taut,
Wounded Karṇa in the chest
And arms
With three *bhalla*-arrows.

11 With the ferocity
Of a snake pressed
Underfoot,
Karṇa swerved
And attacked Bhīma
With sharp arrows.

12 Then began
The gory clash
Between Bhīma
And Rādhā's son Karṇa.
Eyes rolling in anger,
They attacked each other,
Snorting like bulls.

13 With mahā-anger,
They challenged each other,
They attacked each other.
The two magnificent
War-skilled heroes
Were too close
To each other

14 To use arrows,
So they fought
With maces.
Bhīma disintegrated
The chariot-box
Of Karṇa with his mace

15 Into a thousand pieces.
O rājā!
What an incredible feat
That was!
Rādhā's son,
Valiant Karṇa,
Picked up Bhīma's mace,

16 And hurled it
At Bhīma's chariot,
But Bhīma shattered it
With his own mace.
Bhīma flung
Another mace
At Adhiratha's son Karṇa.

17 Karṇa intercepted it
With lovely-feathered
Swift-flying arrows
And made it swerve
So that it sped back
Towards Bhīma.

18 Like a snake hypnotised
By a mantra,
The mace swished back
And thudded on
Bhīma's chariot,
Ripping his war-flag
Into tatters.

19 The impact was such
That Bhīma's charioteer
Lost consciousness.
In a fit of anger,
Bhīma fired
A volley of eight arrows
At Karṇa.

20 With sharp arrows,
Mahā-powerful
Foe-crushing Bhīma,
Smiling as he did so,
O Bharata,
Destroyed

21 The war-flag
The bow and finger-protectors
And the arrows
Of his foe, O Bharata.
Karṇa strung
Another formidable
Gold-decorated bow.

22 Rādhā's son
Karṇa fitted it
With arrows
From his chariot
And killed Bhīma's
Bear-black horses
And both flank-protectors.

23 In this way
Making the chariot
Inoperable,
Karṇa compelled Bhīma
To jump into
The chariot of Nakula,
Like a lion bounding
Up a mountain.

24 O Indra-among-rājās!
Droṇa and Arjuna,
Two mahā-chariot-heroes,
Both versatile-in-weapons
Ācārya and pupil,
Continued their clash.

25 What a clash! –
It dazzled the eyes
And confused the minds
Of all who saw
Their dexterity, accuracy
And manoeuvring skills.

26 Witnessing that clash,
O most excellent Bharata,
Between guru and pupil,
The likes of which
Was never seen before,
The warriors stopped fighting,
And marvelled.

27 Each trying to keep
The other
On his right,
The two heroes
Skilfully manoeuvred
Their chariots
On the battlefield.

28 The prowess of Droṇa
And Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna
Astounded
And delighted
The warriors who witnessed
The duel.

29 Mahārāja!
It was like
Two *śyena*-hawks
Battling in the sky
For a chunk of meat.
Whatever Droṇa did
To outwit
Kuntī's son Arjuna

30 Was foiled
By the Pāṇḍava
Immediately,
With a smile.
When Droṇa found
He was unable
To outwit
Kuntī's son Arjuna

31 The weapons-expert
Resorted to the use
Of divine missiles:
Aindra and Pāśupata,
Tvāṣṭra, Vāyavya, Vāruṇa.

32 But, even as Droṇa
Fired them one by one,
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Repulsed them.
Seeing the Pāṇḍava
Baffling his missiles
With counter-missiles,

33 Droṇa assailed
Pārtha-Arjuna with
Even more sophisticated
Divine missiles,
But no matter what
Missile he hurled
In hopes of victory,

34 Arjuna neutralised it
With a counter-weapon.
And the systematic
Pulverisation of
All the divine missiles
Of Droṇa,

35 So impressed Droṇa
That in his mind
He offered pūjā-praise
To Arjuna.
O Bharata!
He began to think
Of himself
As the world's finest

36 War-weapons-expert
Because of his pupil.
Baffled by
Pārtha-Arjuna
In the midst of
The mahā-ātmaned warriors,
Foe-subduing Droṇa

37 Cheerfully continued
To block Arjuna's advance.
In the inter-space,
Hundreds of gods
And Gandharvas,

38 Ṛṣis
And hosts of Siddhas
Gathered
To witness the combat.
Throngs of apsarās,
Yakṣas and Gandharvas

39 Made the sky resplendent
As when crowded
With clusters of clouds.
From the sky
Disembodied voices
Again and again,

40 O lord of the earth,
Sang praises
Of Droṇa
And Pārtha-Arjuna.
Seeing all the ten directions
Aflame with the dazzling
Divine missiles
Released by the combatants,

41 The Siddhas
And the ṛṣis
Whispered among themselves:
"This clash
Is not between humans
Or anti-gods
Or rākṣasas

42 Or gods
Or Gandharvas.
It is the supreme,
The ultimate
Brahma-battle –
So *vicitra*-varied,
So wonderful,
Never before
Seen or heard.

43 At times the ācārya excels
The Pāṇḍava, at other times
The Pāṇḍava excels Droṇa.
Who can say who's better?

44 Were Rudra-Śiva
To clone himself,
One Śiva fighting
The other –
That is the perfect
Comparison – none other.

45 Ācārya Droṇa
Has immaculate *jñāna,*
Theoretical knowledge;
The Pāṇḍava-Arjuna
Has *jñāna* and yoga,
Theory and its application.
Ācārya Droṇa
Has *śaurya*-valour;
The Pāṇḍava-Arjuna
Has valour and physical strength.

46 No warrior can kill either
Of these mahā-bowmen.
If they so wish, they can destroy
This world and even the gods."

47 Mahārāja!
These were the words
Spoken by visible
And invisible beings
Who witnessed the feats
Of the two bull-brave heroes.

48 Mahā-intelligent Droṇa
Invoked the Brāhma-missile
To the consternation of Arjuna
And the invisible sky-beings.

49 The earth's mountains,
Forests and trees shook,
Storms sprang up,
Oceans swelled.

50 The instant mahā-ātmaned
Drona readied the missile,
The Kaurava
And the Pāṇḍava armies
And all other creatures
Were terrified.

51 O Indra-among-rājās!
Pārtha-Arjuna calmly
Neutralised the Brāhma-missile –
And normalcy was restored.

52 With neither able
To overcome the other,
The continuing clash
Wrought havoc
On the battlefield.

53 O lord of the earth!
Everything was a blur
In that fierce clash
Between Droṇa
And Pārtha-Arjuna.

54 Leaving Pārtha-Arjuna,
Droṇa attacked
The Pāñcālas;
Leaving Droṇa,
Arjuna attacked
The other Kauravas

55 O rājā! Their arrows
In that mahā-clash
Darkened the earth.
That tumultuous battle
Filled all with fear.

56 So thick was the network
Of arrows, like dense clouds,
Not a single sky-flying
Creature made its appearance.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-NINE

1 Mahārāja!
(continued Sañjaya)
So the battle went on
With elephants and horses
And men dying
As Duḥśāsana clashed
With Dhṛṣṭadyumna,

2 Who had earlier confronted
Golden-charioted Droṇa.
Now, angered by Duḥśāsana's arrows,
He attacked your son's horses.

3 Mahārāja!
In that fierce arrow-shower
Of Pṛṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Duḥśāsana's chariot
And charioteer and war-flag
Became invisible.

4 O Indra-among-rājās!
Assailed by the arrows
Of mahā-ātmaned
Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
The Pāñcāla prince,
Duḥśāsana lost the will
To face him.

5 Having made Duḥśāsana
Flee from his formidable
Arrow-shower,
Pṛṣata's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Concentrated next
On Droṇa, afflicting him
With hundreds of arrows.

6 Seeing this,
Hṛdika's son Kṛtavarman
And three uterine brothers
Of Duḥśāsana
Joined forces
To attack Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

7 The bull-brave twins
Nakula and Sahadeva
Protected Dhṛṣṭadyumna.
From the rear
As he rushed
To attack Droṇa
Like a resplendent
Streak of fire.

8 All the magnificent
Mahā-chariot-heroes
Ready to meet death
Fell upon each other
With flaming anger
And physical might.

9 O rājā!
Pure-ātmaned,
Clean-charactered,
Seeking heaven
As their reward,
Of noble ārya-birth,
Eager for victory,
They fought with dignity.

10 O lord of men!
They came from families
Of spotless karma
And high intelligence.
The battle they fought
Was a battle of dharma
For the Supreme Goal.

11 Nothing against dharma,
Nothing criminal . . .
No disembowelling *karṇi*-arrows,
No tunnelling *nālīka*-arrows,
No poisoned or *vastika*-needle-arrows . . .

12 No spiked *sūcī*-arrows
No thorny *kapiśa*-arrows
No bull-bone arrows
No elephant-bone arrows
No two-headed *saṁśliṣṭhas*
No foul-smelling *pūtirnas*
No zigzagging *jihmagas* . . .

13 Because they all desired
To achieve the realm
Of the blessed and virtuous,
They used only such weapons
As prescribed by the rules
Of war and battle.

14 Tumultuous it was,
But the clash between
Your four warriors
And the three Pāṇḍavas
That took place
Was completely free
From unfairness and impropriety.

15 O rājā!
Seeing the bull-brave
Chariot-heroes of your army
Under pressure from the twins
Nakula and Sahadeva,
Swift-in-weapons-use
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Attacked Droṇa.

16 Blocked by those two
Lions-among-men heroes,
Your four warriors
Were like four storms
Buffeting two mountains.

17 Each bull-brave
Chariot-hero twin
Took on two adversaries.
In the meantime,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Decided to confront
Droṇa.

18 Seeing
Difficult-to-defeat-in-battle
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Advancing towards Droṇa,
And the heroes of his army
Locked in battle
With the twins,

19 Duryodhana,
O mahārāja,
Rushed into the fray,
Shooting showers
Of blood-sucking arrows.
Seeing this,
Sātyaki, swiftly,
Confronted Duryodhana.

20 The Kaurava Duryodhana
And the Mādhava Sātyaki
Faced each other, lions-among-men,
Both smiling,
Both eager to kill each other.

21 They remembered
Their childhood days,
Sentimental childhood days,
And they kept looking
At each other,
Smiling.

22 Rājā Duryodhana
Broke the silence,
Blaming himself
For his misbehaviour,
Apologising, saying
To his loved-and-loving-friend,
His *sakhā* Sātyaki:

23 "My *sakhā*!
Shame on anger and greed!
Shame on folly!
Shame on revenge!
Shame on the code
Of Kṣatriyas!
Shame on pride and prowess!

24 O bull-brave Śini hero!
For they are the reason
You are targeting me,
And I you.
There was a time
I loved you more
Than life itself,
And you loved me.

25 Today all those
Childhood memories
Come back to me.
Today on the battlefield
All that sweetness
Is reduced
To the taste of dust.

26 O Sātvata! What is left
Now but anger and greed?
Isn't that what this war
Is all about?"
Sātyaki replied –

27 The supremely versed-
In-war-weapons Sātyaki
Fitted some sharp arrows
And replied, smiling:
"Rāja-putra! Prince!
This is no sabhā.
This is no house
Of an ācārya

28 O rājā!
This is not the place
Where we used
To play together."
"O bull-brave Śini hero!"
said Duryodhana,
"Where have they gone,
The days of our childhood games?

29 From where has this war come?
Who can quarrel with Kāla?
We need neither wealth
Nor the desire for wealth.

30 Yet here we are,
All of us, greedy for wealth,
Fighting this war."
The Mādhava-descendant
(continued Sañjaya)
Said to Rājā Duryodhana:

31 "Rājā!
It has always been so –
Kṣatriyas have fought
With their gurus,
Their elders.
If you really love me,
Kill me! Now!
Don't delay!

32 O bull-brave Bharata!
If you do so, I will reach
The realm of the doers
Of good deeds.
Hurl all your śakti
And valour at me!

33 I do not wish
To witness any more
This mahā-massacre
Of my friends."
With this firm
And clear reply,
Sātyaki

34 Advanced fearlessly
With no concern
Of what could happen
To him. Seeing
Mahā-muscled Sātyaki
Advancing, O rājā,
Your son blocked him

35 With an arrow-shower.
The clash
That took place
On the battlefield
Between the Kaurava lion
And the Mādhava lion

36 Resembled the clash
Between an angry lion
And an angry elephant.
Targeting the difficult-
To-defeat-in-battle
Sātvata hero Sātyaki
By pulling his bowstring
Fully taut,

37 Duryodhana angrily
Wounded him
With ten arrows.
Sātyaki retaliated
By wounding Duryodhana

38 First with fifty,
Then twenty,
And finally
With ten arrows.
O rājā! Your son,
Smiling, targeted
Sātyaki

39 With a bow
Pulled ear-taut,
And wounded him
With thirty arrows.
Then, with a razor-shaft
He sliced in two

40 Sātyaki's bow
With arrows in it
Still strung.
With amazing dexterity
Sātyaki readied
An even stronger bow
And showered your son
With a volley of arrows.

41 As those marked-for-his-death
Arrows sped towards him,
Rājā Duryodhana sliced
Them into countless pieces –
A feat that everyone
Loudly applauded.

42 With seventy-three arrows,
Stone-whetted,
Golden-winged,
Fired from a bow
Pulled ear-taut,
Duryodhana
Targeted Sātyaki.

43 All those arrows
And the bow that shot them
Were shattered by Sātyaki
With a copious
Retaliatory volley
That wounded Duryodhana.

44 Mahārāja!
Severely injured
By the attack
Of the Dāśārha hero
Sātyaki,
Duryodhana took cover
Inside his chariot.

45 Slowly
Your son recovered
And once again
Attacked Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
With a network
Of fierce arrows.

46 O rājā!
Sātyaki also
Kept targeting
Duryodhana's chariot
With his arrows.
It was horrendous,
That clash between
The two heroes.

47 As arrows thudded
On their bodies,
The noise was like
Huge heaps of dry wood
Crackling in a
Forest-conflagration.

48 So many thousands
Of arrows!
They shrouded the earth.
So many arrows –
No birds or insects
Could fly in the sky.

49 Seeing the superlative
Chariot-hero Sātyaki
Of the Mādhava race
Advancing swiftly,
Karṇa moved in
To protect your son
Duryodhana.

50 Mahā-powerful Bhīma,
Unable to tolerate
This tactic of Karṇa,
Intercepted
And assailed Karṇa
With a volley
Of sharp arrows.

51 Karṇa merely smiled.
He shattered not only
All those sharp arrows,
He also splintered
Bhīma's bow and arrow.
With another volley
He killed Bhīma's charioteer.

52 Infuriated,
The Pāṇḍava Bhīma
Wielded his mace
And destroyed
The bow, war-flag
And charioteer
Of Karṇa.

53 Mahā-powerful Bhīma
Shattered a wheel
Of Karṇa's chariot,
But single-wheeled Karṇa
Remained as steady as
A Himālayan hill.

54 Karṇa's one-wheeled chariot
Continued to be pulled
By his horses –
It seemed as if
A one-wheeled chariot
Of the Sun god
Was being pulled
By seven horses.

55 But Karṇa refused
To accept this insult
By Bhīma.
With arrow-nets
And other weapons
He kept harassing Bhīma.

56 And Bhīma similarly
Angrily assailed
The charioteer's son.
While the clash continued,
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Angrily said

57 To the lion-like Pāñcālas
And bull-brave Matsyas:
"The mahā-chariot-heroes
Who are like our own lives,
Like our very heads,

58 All our bull-brave warriors –
Are fighting the sons
Of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
What are you doing here,
Looking silly
And bewildered?

59 Go where
My chariot-heroes are fighting.
Remember the dharma
Of a Kṣatriya, and do
What you must do.

60 Win or die –
The final reward is yours.
Win – and perform yajñas
With copious *dakṣiṇā*-offerings;

61 Die – and like gods
Enjoy the worlds
Of virtuous-deed-doers."
Inspired to do battle
By the words
Of rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
The mahā-chariot-heroes,

62 True to the ideal
Of Kṣatriya-dharma,
Launched an offensive
Against Droṇa.
The Pāñcālas attacked
With arrow-showers
From one front,

63 And the other heroes,
With Bhīma
As their leader,
Attacked
From the other front
And surrounded Droṇa.

64 Three of the Pāṇḍavas –
The twins
Nakula-and-Sahadeva
And Bhīma –
These three
Mahā-chariot-heroes
Were crooked-minded.
They shouted
To Dhanañjaya-Arjuna:
"Quick!
Separate these Kauravas
From Droṇa!

65 Only
When the warriors
Who protect him
Are killed,
Can the Pāñcālas
Kill Droṇa."
So Pārtha-Arjuna
Attacked the Kauravas.

66 O Bharata!
In the meantime,
Droṇa launched
His own offensive
Against the Pāñcālas
Led by Dhṛṣṭadyumna.
On the fifth day,
Warriors on both sides
Indulged in indiscriminate
Mutual slaughter.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED NINETY

1 This was the clash
(continued Sañjaya)
In which Droṇa angrily
Devastated the Pāñcālas
Like Śakra-Indra
In the distant past
Routing the Dānavas.

2 Mahārāja!
Though slaughtered
By Droṇa,
These mahā-chariot-heroes
Never for an instant
Showed any fear of him.

3 Mahārāja!
The Pāñcāla
Mahā-chariot-heroes
And the Sṛñjayas
Never for an instant
Stopped attacking Droṇa.

4 Targeted by swarms
Of arrows on all sides,
The Pāñcālas screamed
In agony.

5 Seeing mahā-ātmaned Droṇa
Devastating the Pāñcālas
And showering arrow-volleys,
The Pāṇḍavas were alarmed.

6 Mahārāja!
So fierce was the carnage
Of horses and soldiers
In that battle
That the Pāṇḍavas gave up
Hopes of victory.

7 "He will consume us all,
This Droṇa who is expert
In the use of super-weapons,
Like a raging fire
Consuming heaps of dry grass
In a forest
At the end of summer.

8 No one even dares
To look at him
On the battlefield.
And Arjuna
Who knows well
The dharma of warfare
Will never fight him."

9 Seeing Kuntī's sons
Harassed and outfought
By the arrows of Droṇa,
Intelligent Keśava-Krishna,
Always seeking the welfare
Of the Pāṇḍavas,
Said to Arjuna:

10 "Droṇa knows all
There is to know
About bowcraft.
So long as he
Wields his bow,
Even the gods
Led by Vāsava-Indra
Cannot defeat him.

11 Humans can defeat him
If the lays down his weapon.
Think it over, Pāṇḍava!
If you want victory,
You must discard dharma.

12 It's the only way
You can stop
Golden-charioted Droṇa
From killing you all.
I can tell you this:
If Aśvatthāmaṇ is killed,
He will stop fighting.

13 Someone has to go
And tell him:
'Aśvatthāman has died
On the battlefield.' "
O rājā!
Kuntī's son
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Was not pleased,

14 But the others approved,
And so did Yudhiṣṭhira,
Though reluctantly.
By mahā-muscled Bhīma
A mahā-elephant

15 Named Aśvatthāman
Was slaughtered
With a mace, O rājā.
This fierce foe-crushing
Tusker belonged to
The ruler of Mālava
Named Indravarman.

16 Having killed the elephant
Bhīma shamefully
Approached Droṇa
And shouted:
"Aśvatthāman is dead!"

17 Knowing very well it was
The huge elephant Aśvatthāman
Who was dead,
Bhīma spoke this lie.

18 Droṇa heard the terrible
Words of Bhīma. His limbs
Dissolved, like sand-grains
Scattering in water.

19 Then he thought:
*No, this is a lie.*
*I know my son's prowess.*
So the regained his calm
Even after hearing
Of his son's alleged death.

20 He reassured himself
That his son was not one
To be so easily killed.
Very quickly
He regained control
Of his troubled mind.

21 Eager to kill
Pṛṣata's son
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Who had taken birth
To kill him,
Droṇa blanketed him
With a volley
Of *Kaṅka*-feathered arrows

22 Twenty thousand
Bull-brave Pāñcāla heroes
Retaliated against Droṇa
As he careened
Over the battlefield
By showering him
With arrows.

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23 O lord of the earth!
Like the sun obscured
By thick dark clouds
In the monsoon,
Droṇa was lost
To our sight
In that arrow-shower.

24 Foe-exterminating Droṇa
Repulsed that arrow-offensive
Of the Pāñcālas,
And invoked
The divine power
Of the Brāhma-missile

25 To wipe out
Once and for all
The brave Pāñcālas.
Having destroyed
That entire army,
Droṇa shone resplendent.

26 In that horrendous clash,
He ruthlessly sliced
The heads and gold-
Ornamented mace-thick
Arms of the Pāñcālas.

27 Butchered by Droṇa
The son of Bharadvāja,
The earth-lords toppled
Like storm-felled trees.

28 O Bharata!
The battle ground became
A sticky mire of blood
And flesh of fallen
Horses and elephants.

29 After exterminating
Twenty thousand
Pāñcāla chariot-heroes,
Droṇa stood tall
On the battlefield
Like a smokeless
Pillar of fire.

30 Then, infuriated,
Bharadvāja's son,
Illustrious Droṇa
Severed the head
Of Vasudāna
With a *bhalla*-arrow.

31 Next, he wiped out
Fifty Matsya warriors,
Six hundred Sṛñjayas,
And after killing
Ten thousand elephants
He slaughtered
Ten thousand cavalry.

32 Seeing Droṇa
On his gory mission
Of Kṣatriya-kill,
A host of ṛṣis,
Led by Havyavāha
The god of fire,
Approached him.

33 Viśvāmitra
Jamadgni
Bharadvāja
Gautama
Vasiṣṭha
Kaśyapa
Atri –
These were
The famed sages
Who came
To take Droṇa
To the realm
Of Brahmā.

34 Accompanying them were
Sika
Pṛśni
Garga
The sunray-swallowing
Vālakhilyas
Bhṛgu
Aṅgiras
And other subtle-formed
mahā-ṛṣis.

35 To resplendent Droṇa
On the field of battle
They said:
"You have fought
Using adharma.
Your end has come.

36 Drop your weapons, Droṇa,
And look at us.
You must not do any more
Cruel karma.

37 You are wise
In the Vedas
And Vedāṅgas.
You are a Brahmin
Devoted to truth
And dharma.
Such behaviour
Does not become you.

38 O wielder
Of infallible weapons!
Give up your weapons!
Take your stand
On what is eternal!
Your days in the world
Of humans are over.

39 With your Brāhma-missile
You destroyed those
Who had no defence against Brāhma-missiles.
O twice-born one!
That is not good karma.

40 O twice-born Droṇa!
Lay down your weapons.
Do not delay.
O twice-born Brahmin!
Enough of ill deeds
And bad karma!
No more!"

41 Hearing the words
Of the ṛṣis,
Recalling the words
Of Bhīma,
Seeing Dhṛṣṭadyumna
In front of him –
Demoralised Droṇa.

42 He was confused,
Full of doubts,
And so he asked
Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira,
"Is my son dead
Or not?"

43 Droṇa was convinced,
Absolutely convinced
That not even for the sake
Of lordship over the three worlds
Would Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Tell a lie.

44 That is why
That bull-brave Brahmin
Asked him
And none else;
Since his boyhood
He had respected
The Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira
As a truth-speaker.

45 Knowing that Droṇa
Was adamant in his mission
Of Kṣatriya-overkill,
Govinda-Krishna said
To Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira:

46 “If infuriated Droṇa
Decides to fight
For just half a day,
I can tell you this
In all truth –
Your army is doomed.

47 Save us from Droṇa!
Under the circumstances,
A lie is better
Than the truth.
Speaking a lie
To save life
Is no crime.

48 No guilt attaches
If a lie is spoken
To a woman,
Or in a marriage,
Or to save cattle,
Or to save
A Brahmin.”

49 While they were conversing,
Bhīma interrupted:
“Mahārāja!
When I heard how
Mahā-ātmaned Droṇa
Could be dealt with,
From the Mālava-ruler
Indravarman in your army
I selected an elephant

50 Named Aśvatthāman –
As gigantic a beast
As Śakra-Indra’s Airāvata –
And I killed him,
And I went to Droṇa
And said:

51 'Aśvatthāman is dead.
O Brahmin!
Stop fighting!
Stop fighting!'
That bull-brave Brahmin
Did not believe me.

52 If you want victory,
Listen to Govinda-Krishna.
O rājā!
Convince Droṇa
That Aśvatthāman,
The son of Śāradvatī,
Is dead.

53 O rājā!
Lord of the world!
You are respected
In the three worlds
For truth-speaking.
The bull-brave Brahmin
Will stop fighting
If you say it."

54 Bhīma's words
And Krishna's advice
Made vacillating Yudhiṣṭhira
Decide to speak
The untruth.

55 Torn, O rājā,
Between telling a lie
And desire for victory,
Yudhiṣṭhira shouted,
"Aśvatthāman is dead!"
And added, inaudibly,
"– the elephant."

56 Yudhiṣṭhira's chariot
Always sped
A clear four-fingers
Above the ground.
But the instant
He spoke the lie,
His chariot's wheels
Touched ground,
And remained ever so.

57 The words of Yudhiṣṭhira
Made the mahā-chariot-hero
Droṇa grieve for his son,
And lose the will to live.

58 He heard the news
Of the death of his son.
And recalling the words
Of the ṛṣis
He felt he was guilty
Of crimes against
The mahā-ātmaned Pāṇḍavas.

59 Gloom and confusion
Overpowered him.
Even the sight
Of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
In front of him
Failed to revive him,
O rājā.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED NINETY-ONE

1 Seeing Droṇa despairing
And grief-stricken,
The Pāñcāla-rājā's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna
(said Sañjaya)
Launched a fresh offensive.

2 Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Was the gift of the gods
Obtained by rājā Drupada
At a mahā-sacrifice
Conducted to obtain a son
Who would kill Droṇa.

3 To an adamantine bow
Whose unbreakable bow-string
Twanged with the rumble
Of thunderclouds,
A bow of celestial make,
Fitting a snake-venomed,

4 Fearful, fire-spitting arrow,
The Pāñcāla prince
Dhṛṣṭadyumna prepared
To kill Droṇa.

5 And when he pulled
The bowstring taut
To make a maṇḍala,
Within that circle
Blazed the splendour
Of an autumnal sun.

6 Seeing Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna's
Dazzling bow,
The soldiers thought Kāla-calamity
Had come, the final doom.

7 Seeing that arrow strung
And targeted at him,
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa
Thought Kāla had come
To claim his body.

8 O Indra-among-rājās!
Ācārya Droṇa tried
To repulse that weapon,
But the mahā-ātmaned
Hero's celestial weapons
Failed to materialise.

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9 For four days and a night
He had fired arrows;
Now, at the end of
The fifth day,
He had no arrows left.

10 Lamenting his son's death,
With no more arrows left,
With his celestial weapons
Refusing to materialise,

11 He decided to follow
The advice of the ṛṣis
And lay down his weapons.
He had not the heart
Any more to fight.

12 But he picked up
His Aṅgiras-bow
Of celestial make,
And virulent
Brahma-daṇḍa arrows,
And continued
To fight Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

13 Blanketing Dhṛṣṭadyumna
With an arrow-shower,
Infuriated Droṇa
Harassed his enemy.

14 With some remaining sharp arrows
Droṇa shredded
Dhṛṣṭadyumna's bow, arrows, flag
And killed his charioteer.

15 Dhṛṣṭadyumna smiled,
Readied another bow
And seriously wounded Droṇa
In the chest
With a sharp arrow.

16 Though grievously hurt,
The mahā-bowman Droṇa,
Unperturbed,
Sliced Dhṛṣṭadyumna's bow
With a *bhalla*-arrow.

17 Lord of the earth!
With the exception
Of mace and sword,
Irresistible Droṇa
Shattered every other weapon
Of his adversary.

18 Then, O foe-tormentor,
Angry Droṇa targeted
Fuming Dhṛṣṭadyumna
With nine life-threatening arrows.

19 Intending to use
The divine Brāhma-missile,
The supremely self-confident
Mahā-chariot-hero
Dhṛṣṭadyumna manoeuvred
His horses so that
They mixed with Droṇa's.

20 They were magnificent,
They were beautiful,
Those horses!
O bull-brave Bharata,
They were wind-swift,
Pigeon-complexioned
And crimson-skinned.

21 Mahārāja!
The mix of crimson
And pigeon-grey
Was like dark
Monsoon clouds
Flashing with lightning.

22 Magnaminous-and-immeasurable-
Ātmaned Droṇa the twice-born
Shattered the wheel-joints,
The shaft-joints and other joints
Of Dhṛṣṭadyumna's chariot.

23 Bow
War-flag
Charioteer –
All three destroyed –
The Pāñcāla prince
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Overcame his plight
By whirling his mace.

24 But even as the mace
Hurtled towards him,
The truly illustrious
Mahā-chariot-hero
Angrily
Disintegrated it
With his arrows.

25 After the destruction
Of his mace by Droṇa,
Lion-like Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Picked up
A glittering sword
And a shield
Embossed
With a hundred shining moons.

26 It appeared
To the Pāñcāla prince
Dhṛṣṭadyumna that now
Was the right time
To put an end
To the life of the valiant,
The mahā-ātmaned ācārya.

27 Leaping from his chariot-box
To the chariot-shaft,
Sword and hundred-moon shield
Upraised, he attacked
Droṇa in his chariot.

28 The ill-deed intention
Of the mahā-chariot-hero Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Was to plunge his sword
In Droṇa's chest
And rip it open.

29 He took his stand
On the shaft-joint
Of Droṇa's chariot,
Just behind the horses.
A remarkable feat,
For which he received
Pūjā-praise from
The soldiers on the field.

30 Because he was standing
On the yoke, behind
The backs of the red horses,
Droṇa was unable
To strike at him.
A wondrous feat!

31 Each fought with the swiftness
Of a hawk
Swooping for a piece of meat –
These two heroes:
Pṛṣata's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
And Droṇa.

32 Protecting his own red horses,
Droṇa wielded
His chariot *śakti*-spear
And one by one
Killed the pigeon-grey horses
Of his enemy.

33 Lord of the earth!
Dhṛṣṭadyumna's horses fell
And Droṇa's red steeds
Emerged free from the tangle.

34 The yajña-born Pṛṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
The excellent, mahā-chariot-hero,
Refused
To tolerate this feat.

35 O rājā!
Finest-of-swordsmen
Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Deprived of his chariot,
Flailing his sword,
Attacked Droṇa,
Like Vinatā's son Garuḍa
Swooping on a snake.

36 O rājā!
Eager to kill
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa,
He looked like Viṣṇu
In the distant past
Rushing to kill
Hiraṇyakaśipu.

37 O Kaurava monarch!
On the battlefield
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Displayed all the twenty-one
Forms of sword-skill.

38 Such exquisite swordsmanship!
*Bhrānta*-on the run fencing
*Udbhrānta* upraised sword
*Āviddha* whirling sword
*Āpluta* all these three together
*Prasṛta* sword-tip thrust
*Sṛta* trick thrust
*Parivṛtta* left-and-right thrust
*Nivṛtta* retreat thrust –
With shield in one hand.

39 *Sampāta* thrust and parry
*Samudīrṇa* showing off swordplay
*Bhārata* limb-plunge
*Kauśika* unique swordplay
*Sātvata* under shield-cover thrust.

40 Eager to kill Droṇa,
He showed his sword-skills.
Witnessing the varied
And vivid sword-and-shield
Artistry of Dhṛṣṭadyumna,

41 The warriors on the field
And the gods in the sky
Marvelled.
With a thousand arrows,
The hundred-moon-decorated

42 Shielf and the sword
Of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Were shattered by Droṇa.
The single-span-long
*Vaitastikā*-arrows

43 Meant for close quarter combat
Were only with Droṇa
And no one else,
Except
Śaradvata's son Kṛpa
Pārtha-Arjuna
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Vaikartana-Karṇa

44 Pradyumna
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki
And Abhimanyu.
O Bhārata.
Nocking a supreme arrow
Of adamantine strength
In his bow,

45

Ācārya Droṇa prepared
To kill the pupil
Who was as dear to him
As his own son.
But the bull-brave
Śini hero Sātyaki
Splintered that arrow
With ten sharp arrows

46

While your son Duryodhana
And mahā-ātmaned Karṇa watched –
And so saved Dhṛṣṭadyumna
From death
At the hands of ācārya Droṇa.

47

O Bharata!
The truly illustrious Sātyaki
Was weaving his chariot
In and out
Of the positions
Of Droṇa
Karṇa
And Kṛpa.

48

Seeing him do this
Were the two mahā-ātmaned ones:
Viśvaksena-Krishna
And Dhanañjaya-Arjuna.
They offered pūjā-praise
To the Vṛṣṇi-hero Sātyaki:
"*Sādhu*! *Sādhu*! Excellent!"

49

Because Sātyaki systematically
Was destroying the divine weapons
Of their enemies.
Viśvakesena-Krishna and Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Now attacked the enemy forces.

50 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Said to Krishna:
"Look, Keśava-Krishna!
Look at the fun
The Mādhava Sātyaki
Is having with
Ācārya Droṇa's chariot
And the chariots
Of their great leaders!

51 And what joy it is
For me and for
Mādrī's sons
Nakula and Sahadeva
And Bhīma
And rājā Yudhiṣṭhira!

52 He's playing
With these mahā-chariot-heroes, Sātyaki is!
He's enhancing Vṛṣṇi glory,
This weapons-expert, he's not proud
As he races all over the field.

53 The Siddhas
And the soldiers
Are awe-struck,
And they praise him,
For here is a hero
Who is invincible,
And so they shout
'*Sādhu*! *Sādhu*!
Excellent! Excellent!'
Warriors on both sides
Of the battlefield
Witness his feat
And offer pūjā-praise."

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED NINETY-TWO

1 Infuriated by these feats
Of Sātyaki (continued Sañjaya)
Duryodhana and other Kauravas
Quickly targeted Sātvata Śini's grandson.

2 O venerable lord!
Kṛpa and Karṇa
And your sons
Showered arrows
On Śini's grandson Sātyaki,
Seriously wounding him.

3 Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira,
Mādrī's twin sons by Pāṇḍu
(Nakula and Sahadeva),
And powerful Bhīma
Rushed to rescue Sātyaki.

4 The mahā-chariot-hero
Gotamā's son Kṛpa,
Karṇa and Duryodhana
Encircled Śini's grandson
With arrow-showers.

5 O rājā! Śini's grandson
With his weapons
Repulsed the sudden arrow-showers
Of those mahā-chariot-heroes.

6 In that mahā-carnage,
With his celestial weapons
He repulsed the celestial weapons
Of his mahā-ātmaned enemies.

7 That battleground of rājās
Was a carnival of cruelty,
Like the battleground
On the distant past
When wrathful Rudra-Śiva
Annihilated all creatures.

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8 O Bharata!
Arms
Heads
Bows
Umbrellas
Fly-whisks

9 Littered the battlefield,
Along with
Broken-wheeled chariots,
Ripped mahā-flags,

10 And corpses
Of brave chariot-heroes,
Making the field impassable.
O excelling Kaurava!
Mutilated by arrows,
One could see warriors

11 Wriggling and rolling
On the ground
In that mahā-battle.
In that clash
That resembled the war
Between the gods
And the anti-gods
In the distant past;

12 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
Said to the Kṣatriyas:
"O mahā-chariot-heroes!
Advance in a body
Against jar-born
Kumbha-yoni Droṇa.

13 Brave Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Is locked in battle
With Bharadvāja's son
Droṇa.
He is using all his śakti
To kill the son
Of Bharadvāja.

14 It seems
From the way
He is fighting
This mahā-war,
Angry Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Will kill Droṇa.

15 So join forces
And help him
Finish off
Jar-born Droṇa."
Ordered
By Yudhiṣṭhira,
The mahā-chariot-hero Sṛñjayas.

16 Eager to kill
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa,
Rushed against him.
Bharadvāja's son,
Mahā-chariot-hero Droṇa
Faced them valiantly

17 He had made up his mind
To die.
His firm-in-truth decision
Made the earth shake,

18 Made fierce winds blow,
Instilling fear
In the hosts of warriors.
Mahā-meteors
Streamed from the sun,

19 Dazzling both armies
And foretelling mahā-fear.
O respectworthy lord!
The weapons of Bharadvāja's
Son Droṇa blazed.

20 Chariots
rumbled
Horses
shed tears.
Mahā-chariot-hero
Droṇa
Son of Bharadvāja
Was demoralised.

21 His left arm
trembled
His left eye
flickered
He saw
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
In front of him
And wavered.

22 Desiring the heaven promised
By the Brahmā-knowing ṛṣis,
He decided to leave his life
After fighting the good fight.

23 Though encircled
By the soldiers of Drupada
On all four sides,
Droṇa raced
All over the battlefield
Exterminating his enemies.

24 After wiping out
Twenty thousand Kṣatriyas,
Foe-crushing Droṇa
Killed a hundred thousand
Elephants with sharp arrows.

25 Then,
Standing tall
In the field
Like a smokeless
Pillar of fire,
He readied
The Brāhma-missile
For the annihilation
Of Kṣatriyas.

26 Bhīma noticed
The Pāñcāla prince
Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
His weapons destroyed
And without his chariot,
And rushed to save
The mahā-ātmaned prince.

27 Stopping beside
The Pāñcāla prince,
Foe-subduing Bhīma
Took him in his chariot,
And seeing Droṇa shooting
Arrows at close quarters,
He said:

28 "No one but you
Will even dare fight
Ācārya Droṇa.
Do all you can
To kill him.
The burden is yours."

29 Inspired by Bhīma,
Mahā-muscled Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Leapt up and readied
A magnificent bow
Capable of absorbing
The severest strain.

30 Livid with rage,
Shooting arrows
All over the field,
Eager to pin down
The hard-to-restrain ācārya,
He kept discharging
Showers of arrows.

31 Two superlative warriors
Adding glory to war!
Two inflamed heroes
Battling with celestial
And other Brāhma-missiles –
Each trying to block
The progress of the other.

32 Mashārāja!
Destroying all the weapons
Of Droṇa,
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Shrouded
Bharadvāja's son Droṇa
With his mahā-weapons.

33 Unfadingly-glorious-in-battle
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Annihilated the warriors
Of the Vasātis, Śibis,
Bāhlīkas and Kauravas
Who were entrusted
With protecting Droṇa.

34 O rājā!
Obscuring the directions
With networks of arrows,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Shone
Like the ray-shooting sun.

35 But Droṇa retaliated
By shattering his bow
And wounding him
In his vital organs.
His suffering was intense.

36 O Indra-among-rājās!
Adamantine-in-anger
Bhīma postioned
His chariot alongside Droṇa's chariot
And said
Softly:

37 "If learned Brahmins,
Dissatisfied with their duties
As Brahmins, stayed away
From fighting, no Kṣatriyas
Would lose their lives.

38 Ahiṁsā is said to be
To highest dharma.
Its root is the Brahmin,
And you are the ideal Brahmin.

39 O Brahmin!
Ideal Brāhmin!
Lapped in love
For your son,
Your wife,
For wealth,
Like an ignorant fool
You have killed
So many *mlecchas*
Of other castes
And so many others.

40 You should be ashamed!
For the sake
Of your son
You have chosen adharma.
Forgetting
Your own duties,
You have slaughtered
Those who follow
Their duties.

41 And the person
For whose sake
You are fighting,
For whose sake
You are living –
He is sprawled
On the field
At the back –
He is dead –
You do not even
Know where!

42 How can you
Disbelieve the word
Of Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira?"
Droṇa heard Bhīma.
And laid aside his bow.

43 Wishing to forsake all weapons,
Dharmātmā Droṇa exclaimed:
"Karṇa! Karṇa! Duryodhana!
O mahā-bowman Kṛpa!

44 I tell you this
Again and again:
Do your very best
On the battlefield.
May the Pāṇḍavas
Favour you
By not harming you.
I am laying aside
My weapons."

45 Mahārāja!
Then,
He exclaimed loudly:
"O Droṇi my son!"
He laid aside his weapons
And he sat down
In his chariot.

46 Bestowing his "do-not-fear" blessing
On all creatures,
He immersed himself in yoga.
Valiant Dhṛṣṭadyumna saw his chance.

47 Leaving his arrow-nocked bow
In his chariot,
He leapt down
With unsheathed sword
And sprinted towards Droṇa.

48 Seeing Droṇa
At the mercy
Of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
All the men
And other creatures too
Wailed "Hai! Hai!"

[VII:192:49-54]

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49 “Hai! Hai!”
They all wailed.
“Shame! Shame!”
His weapons renounced,
Droṇa sat, supremely calm.

50 Immersed in yoga, he shone
With mahā-tapasyā.
His heart was deep
In the Supreme Purāṇa-Puruṣa Viṣṇu.

51 Head slightly bent back
Chest slightly forward
Eyes closed
Serene in Sattva
Heart reposed and steady

52 Meditating
On the Syllable
Auṁ
That is Brahman
The indestructible
God-of-gods
The Supreme Lord
*Parama Prabhu*
Droṇa of mahā-tapasyā
Became a being of light

53 And the ācārya attained
The celestial realm so difficult
To attain even for saints.
With Droṇa adazzle, it seemed
The sky had two suns.

54 The sky was all light,
All was
One vast light
When Bharadvāja’s son
Droṇa
Dazzling with light
Became a being
Of light.

55 Then
In the blink
Of an eye
The light was gone
And only
The *kilakila*-cries
Of ecstatic gods
Could be heard

56 Praising Droṇa in Brahma-loka,
While Dhṛṣṭadyumna stood
Stupefied. Only five humans
Witnessed this wonder

57 Of unified-in-yoga
Mahātmā Doṇa
Attaining the state
Of supreme blessedness:
I
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Śaradvata's son Kṛpa

58 Vāsudeva-Krishna of the Vṛṣṇis
And Pāṇḍu's son
Dharmaputra Yudhiṣṭhira.
None else saw
The Wisdom-Illumination
Of Bharadvāja's son
Droṇa

59 Gloriously
Unified-in-yoga,
O mahārāja!
The Brahmaloka-experience
Is magnificent, celestial, supreme,
Mysterious even to the gods.

60 Ordinary humans
Were unaware
That Droṇa
Had attained
The Supreme Goal.
Ordinary mortals
Did not see
The ascent of
The bull-brave hero
With the ṛṣis

61 To the Brahmaloka.
The foe-subduing
Ācārya Droṇa
Was deep in yoga,
Weapon-less, arrow-riven
Body streaming blood.

62 While all shouted "Shame! Shame!"
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Seized breath-bereft Droṇa
By the hair,

63 And holding him tight
Lopped off the head
Of his silent adversary.
Having slaughtered
Bharadvāja's son,
He expressed his delight
By letting loose

64 A victorious lion-roar
And whirling his sword
On the battlefield.
Eighty-five years old,
Dark-complexioned,
Thick white hair
Covering his ears,

65 For your sake
He fought on the field
Like a sixteen-year old.
Kuntī's mahā-muscled son
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Had said to Dhṛṣṭadyumna:

66 “Son of Drupada!
Capture the ācārya
Alive.
Do not kill him.”
Your soldiers also
Repeatedly said:
“Do not kill him!
Do not kill him!”

67 Moved by compassion,
Arjuna shouted passionately;
But despite Arjuna’s cries
And the cries of
All the earth-lords,

68 Dhṛṣṭadyumna decapitated
Bull-brave Droṇa
Meditating in his chariot.
Droṇa’s blood-dripping body
Toppled from the chariot
On the earth,

69 The body of
Difficult-to-defeat Droṇa,
Like the red-bodied
Sun
Setting.
The soldiers saw
Droṇa slaughtered thus.

70 O rājā!
The brilliant bowman
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Picked up the severed head
Of Droṇa
And flung it
In front of your army.

71 O rājā!
Seeing that head
Fall in their midst,
Forgetting everything else
Your soldiers fled
In sheer panic.

72 Droṇa ascended
To heaven
By the star-path
*Nakṣatra-patha.*
O king!
I saw
With my own eyes
The passing-away
Of Droṇa

73 By the grace of
Sātyavati's son
Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana
Vyāsa,
Like a dazzling
Smoke-less flame

74 Serene in the sky
Of mahā-silence.
The Pāṇḍavas and Sṛñjayas
Attacked the depressed-by-Droṇa's-death
Kauravas,

75 Who fled
In mahā-terror.
Your army scattered.
Sharp arrows
Killed some
And half-killed others.

76 After the death
Of Droṇa,
Your entire army
Became dispirited.
Defeat
In this world
And mahā-fear
Of the other world –

77 This dreadful
Dual deprivation
Destroyed their fortitude
And self-confidence.
The earth-lords searched for
The body of Bharadvāja's son,

78 But could not see it
Anywhere in the heaps
Of headless trunks
On the battlefield.
With victory
In this world
And fame
In the future,
The Pāṇḍavas

79 Screamed
Their lion-roars,
Twanged their bows
And blew their conches.
O rājā! Bhīma
And Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna,

80 Hugged each other
And danced with joy
While the warriors watched.
Foe-tormenting Bhīma
Said to Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna:

81 "Pṛṣata's son!
The next time
I embrace you
Will be when
The charioteer's son Karṇa
And Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons
Are killed – those wicked ones –
And victory is ours."

82 Saying this much,
Exhilarated-with-victory
Bhīma
The son of Pāṇḍu
Slapped his arms
And shook the earth
With his ferocity.

83 Panic seized your soldiers
Again, and they fled.
They forgot
Their Kṣatriya-dharma
And they fled.

84 But the Pāṇḍavas
Exulted, O lord of men;
Great was the thrill
Of the victory,
Great was the joy
At the mass slaughter
Of their foes.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED NINETY-THREE

1 O rājā! (continued Sañjaya)
With Droṇa dead,
Their finest warriors killed,
The Kauravas, harassed
By their foes' weapons, confused,
Gave in to grief.

2 O lord of the earth!
Seeing their enemies exulting,
They trembled in fear repeatedly.
They were so dejected
Their eyes filled with tears.

3 Mind enfeebled,
Enthusiasm gone,
Energy drained,
Wailing and weeping
They surrounded your son.

4 Dust-smeared,
Trembling,
Staring vacantly
At the ten directions,
Voice choked with tears,
They resembled the Daityas
After Hiraṇyākṣa
Had been killed.

5 Surrounded by
The frightened warriors
Like a pack
Of small animals,
Your son rājā Duryodhna,
Disturbed, left the field
And went somewhere else.

6 O Bharata!
Your warriors
Were desolated
By hunger and thirst
And the scorching
Rays of the sun.

7 Like the sun
falling
Like the ocean
drying up
Like Mount Meru
migrating
Like Vāsava-Indra
subjugated

8 Was the inconceivable
Slaughter of the son
Of Bharadvāja, Droṇa;
Seeing which, O rājā,
The Kauravas lost heart
And fled in panic.

9 Seeing Droṇa
Of the golden chariot
Slaughtered,
The Gāndhāra rājā
Śakuni
Also panicked and fled
Along with army.

10 The charioteer's son
Karṇa
Fled in fear too
With his gorgeously
Beflagged mahā-army.

11 The Madra-lord Śalya
With his army of chariots,
Elephants and horses fled
Staring in all directions.

12 "What a pity! What a pity!"
Muttering this, Kṛpa fled
With his beflagged, already
Decimated army of countless soldiers.

13 O rājā!
Kṛtavarman fled
With his army of Bhojas
And what remained
Of the Kaliṅgas
Araṭṭas and Bāhlīkas
In chariots
Pulled by swift horses.

14 O rājā!
Seeing Droṇa killed,
Ulūka
Trembling with fear
Fled
With his foot-soldiers.

15 Handsome and young
And marked
With signs of valour,
Terrified Duḥśāsana
Fled
With his elephant army.

16 Seeing Droṇa killed,
Vṛṣasena fled
With ten thousand chariots
And three thousand elephants.

17 Mahārāja!
The mahā-chariot-hero
Duryodhana also fled
With chariots
Horses
Elephants
And foot-soldiers.

18 O rājā!
Seeing Droṇa killed,
Suśarmā fled
With what remained
Of the suicide squad
Called the *saṁśāptakas*
The "sworn-together" warriors
Who had been decimated
Earlier by diadem-decked Arjuna.

19 Seeing Droṇa
Of the golden chariot
Slaughtered,
They fled,
Some on elephants,
Some in chariots,
Some abandoning their horses.

20 They fled,
Urging fathers
Brothers
Maternal uncles
Sons
And friends
To flee with them.

21 Some urged
Fellow-soldiers
Nephews
And other relatives
To accompany their flight
In the ten directions.

22 Hair dishevelled,
Uniforms loose,
No two soldiers
Fleeing together
Or in the same direction;
Enthusiasm scattered,
Energy exhausted,
It seemed as if
They army was doomed.

23 O bull-brave Bharata!
*Vibho!* Lord!
So many of your warriors
Doffed their armour
And fled,
Shouting to each others,

24 "Wait! Wait!"
But not waiting themselves.
Unyoking the horses from
Ornamented charioteer-less chariots,
They mounted the horses,

25 And spurring them
With bare feet,
They rode away
In furious haste.
While the terrified
Energy-sapped warriors
Were fleeing,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Raced towards his enemies,
Like a *graha*-crocodile
Swimming against
The current.

26 All this time
He had been involved
In a mahā-battle
With Śikhaṇḍin's soldiers
And the Prabhadrakas
Pāñcālas
Cedis
And Kekayas.

27 Musth-elephant-valiant
Difficult-to-defeat-in-battle
Aśvatthāman
Had battled the numerous
Allies of the Pāṇḍavas,
And somehow succeeded
In slipping away.

28 In an instant
The army was fleeing
In total panic.
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Approached Duryodhana
And asked:

29 "O Bharata!
What is wrong?
Why the panic?
Why is everyone fleeing?
O Indra-among-rājās!
Why don't you prevent
This rout?

30 O lord of men!
You don't look
Your normal self.
O earth-lord!
Even the army
Of Karṇa is fleeing.

31 Never before
Have I seen
Your army
In such a plight.
Mahā-muscled Bharata!
What is wrong?
Is your army safe?

32 O rājā!
O Kaurava!
Which chariot-lion
Has reduced your soldiers
To such straits?
Tell me this.
Tell me the truth."

33 Duryodhana listened
To the words of
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
But the bull-brave earth-lord
Could not bring himself
To tell the awful
And unpleasant truth.

34 It seemed as if
Your son's boat
Had splintered mid-ocean
And he was drowning
In grief.
He saw Droṇa's son
Sitting in his chariot,
And tears filled his eyes.

35 Ashamed, he said
To Śaradvata's son Kṛpa:
"May good go with you.
Please explain to him
Why the army is fleeing."

36 O rājā!
Śaradvata's son Kṛpa
Slowly and painfully
Narrated to Droṇa's son
The details
Of his father's slaughter.

37 "Child,"
said Kṛpa,
"We placed Droṇa,
Our finest chariot-hero,
In the front
And began our battle
With the Pāñcālas.

38 No sooner had
The clash begun
Than the Somakas
And the Kauravas
In a mix-up
Started a confused
Mutual mutilation.

39 In the fierce clash
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's warriors
Were badly decimated.
That was when
Your father in anger
Invoked celestial weapons.

40 Invoking the Brāhma-missile
Bull-brave Droṇa
Wiped out
Hundreds and thousands
Of enemy warriors,
Using *bhalla*-arrows
In advance of the missile.

41 Called by Kāla
The All-Consuming Killer,
The Pāṇḍavas, Kekayas,
Matsyas, and specially
The Pāñcālas
Came too near Droṇa's chariot
And were wiped out.

42 With the use
Of the Brāhma-missile
Droṇa exterminated
One thousand
Lion-brave warriors,
And despatched
Two thousand elephants
To the realm of death.

43 Eighty-five years old,
Dark-complexioned,
Thick white hair
Covering his ears,
Drona fought
On the field
Like a sixteen-year old.

44 Their warriors dead-tired,
Their rājās dead,
The Pāñcālas,
Despite their anger,
Became war-weary.

45 Precisely then,
When war-fatigue
Overcame the warriors,
Droṇa the wielder
Of celestial missiles
Appeared on the scene
Like the rising sun.

46 Slicing through the ranks
Of the Pāṇḍavas
With arrows that flashed
Like sun-rays,
Your father dazzled
Like the noonday sun.

47 Scorched by the assault
Of Droṇa
Who consumed their ranks
Like the fiery sun,
The enemy soldiers
Became discouraged
And dispirited.

48 Seeing the arrows
Of Droṇa
Wreaking havoc
In this fashion,
Madhusūdana-Krishna
Always wishing victory
For the sons of Pāṇḍu,
Said:

49 'This finer than the finest
Of arms-wielders,
This leader above all leaders
Of chariot-formations,
Cannot be defeated even
By Vṛtra-slaying Indra.

50 Listen, sons of Pāṇḍu!
Forget dharma
And think of victory
Before Droṇa
Of the golden chariot
Kills you all.

51 If you ask me,
He will stop fighting
The instant he knows
Aśvatthāman is dead.
Someone must lie to him
And tell him,
'Aśvatthāman is dead.' "

52 Kuntī's son
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
Did not like the suggestion.
The others did.
Yudhiṣṭhira approved,
But reluctantly.

53 Bhima shamefully
Went to your father
And said:
'Aśvatthāman is dead.'
However,
Your father refused
To believe him.

54 Your father loved
Aśvatthāman deeply.
He suspected Bhīma
Of lying.
So he approached and asked
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
If you had
Indeed died.

55 Afraid of lying
But eager for victory,
Yudhiṣṭhira witnessed
A maha-elephant
Slaughtered on the field –
An elephant
Named Aśvatthāman –

56 Slaughtered by Bhīma –
A hill-huge beast
Belonging to the Malava –
Ruler Indravarman –
And he said to Droṇa:

57 'The son whom
You so dearly love,
The son for whose sake
You use your weapons –
Aśvatthāman –
The son for whom
You live –
Is dead.

58 He lies sprawled
On the battlefield
Like a baby-lion
In a forest.'

59 He knew
He was lying.
He knew
The consquences of lying.
Yet the rājā lied to Droṇa,
Adding, indistinctly,
Under his breath,
' – the elephant.'

60 Hearing about
Your 'death'
In this way,
Deeply grieving,
Your father recalled
His celestial weapons,
And stopped fighting.

61 Seeing him
Dejected
Grief-stricken
Confused
The Pāñcāla-rājā's son
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Creator-of-cruel-karma
Rushed at him.

62 World-truth-knowing Droṇa
Saw his destined death
Approaching, laid aside
His celestial weapons, and
Serenely sat down for his end.

63 Closing his ears
To the shouts
Of protesting warriors,
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Seized Droṇa's head-hair
With his left hand,
And with his right
Decapitated him.

64 Everyone was shouting,
'Don't kill him!
Don't kill him!'
Arjuna too.
Arjuna leapt from his chariot
And ran towards Droṇa.

65 Learned in dharma,
Arjuna shouted
Again and again
With apraised arm,
'Don't kill the ācārya!
Take him alive!'

66 O bull-brave hero!
He did not listen
To the Kauravas,
He did not listen
To Arjuna –
That butcher
Killed your father.

67 O defectless one!
That is the reason
These soldiers are fleeing.
The death of your father
Has robbed us
Of our courage
And will to live."

Transcreated by P. Lal

68 O rājā! (continued Sañjaya)
Listening to this account
Of the slaughter
Of his father,
Aśvatthāman flamed in anger
Like a trodden snake.

69 O bestower of honour
On others!
Like fire flaming
Fiercely and furiously
The more it is fed
With dry wood-fuel,
Aśvatthāman blazed
On the battlefield
With burning wrath.

70 He squeezed his hands
He gritted his teeth
His eyes became copper-red
He sighed snake-sighs.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED NINETY-FOUR

1 "Sañjaya," asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"What did Aśvatthāman say
When he heard of the adhārmic way
Dhṛṣṭadyumna killed his father?

2 That valiant hero
Who possessed man-made weapons,
As well as
Vāruṇa
Āgneya
Brāhma
Aindra
And Nārāyaṇa missiles
Always at call –

3 When that dharma-excellent
Ācārya was killed
By adhārmic means
By Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
What was Aśvatthāman's reaction?

4 Seeking guṇa-excellence,
Mahā-ātmaned Droṇa
Had acquired proficiency
In bowcraft from Paraśurāma,
And passed it on
To his son Aśvatthāman.

5 In this world,
A man wants
Only his son
To excel him
In every guṇa –
And none else.

6 Mahā-ātmaned ācāryas
Know many secrets
Which they pass on
Only to their sons
Or devoted pupils.

7 Sañjaya,
The valiant son
Of Droṇa,
Aśvatthāman,
The son
Of Śaradvati,
Knows all the secrets,
And is indeed
A second Droṇa.

8 In weapons
a second Paraśurāma
In warfare
Puraṁdara-Indra
In valour
Kārtāvīryārjuna
In intelligence
Bṛhaspati

9 In firmness
a mountain
In energy
like fire
In profundity
an ocean
In anger this youth
is a venomous snake . . .

10 The best chariot-hero in the world,
A hard-working never-tiring bowman,
He runs with the speed of wind,
Angered he is like Antaka-Doom.

11 The earth trembled
Under the onslaught
Of his arrows
On the field of battle.
This truly illustrious hero
Is indefatigable
In war.

12 Purified
By the wisdom
Of the Vedas,
Purified
By the strength
Of his vows,
He has mastered
The Veda of bowcraft,
He is fathomless
Like the mahā-ocean,
Profound
Like Rāma
The son of Daśaratha.

13 When he heard
That the dharma-excellent
Ācārya had been killed
By adhārmic means
By Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
What was Aśvatthāman's reaction?

14 People say
That Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Was born from the yajña
To kill mahā-ātmaned Droṇa;
Similarly;
Aśvatthāman was born
To kill the Pāñcāla
Prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

15 But tell me –
What did Aśvatthāman say
When he heard
How cruelly, viciously, barbarously
Droṇa had been killed
By Dhṛṣṭadyumna of poor foresight."

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED NINETY-FIVE

1 O bull-brave king!
(replied Sañjaya)
When Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Heard that his father
Had been killed deceitfully
By Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Perpetrator of wicked karma,
Tears clouded his eyes.
Wrath suffused him.

2 O Indra-among-rājās!
Such was his rage
That his frame
Became a mass of flame
Like Antaka
The deity of doom
At the expiry
Of a cycle of Kāla
Consuming all creatures.

3 He kept wiping
His eyes
Again and again,
And sighing heavily.
He said
To Duryodhana:

4 "I have heard
How my father
Laid down his weapons.
I have heard
How he was
Savagely killed
By those who fly
The banner of dharma.

5 I have heard
O Dharma-putra Yudhiṣṭhira's
Ignoble, wicked involvement.
If you go to war,
You can either win
Or lose.

6 O rājā!
This much is sure–
Who dies in battle
Is always praised.
If a soldier meets death
In fair combat,

7 That should never be
Cause for grief.
That's what the twice-born
Have declared.
I have no doubt
Whatsoever
That my father has gone
To the realm of heroes.

8 O lion-among-men!
Why should I then
Grieve for him?
But a man of dharma –
To be seized
By his hair

9 In front of the eyes
Of all the warriors –
That is an insult
That penetrates
To my very marrow!
I was living –
And the father I love
Was seized by his hair!

10 What man would like
To have a son
After this?
Kāma-lust
Anger
Ignorance
Exhilaration
Juvenile delinquency –

11 These make people go against dharma,
These make people humiliate others.
Pṛṣata's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Has done a deed of mahā-adharma.

12 He has done this
To insult me.
He is wicked-ātmaned.
He is depraved.
He will suffer
The terrible consequences
Of this crime.

13 So will those liars,
The Pāṇḍavas
Who are involved
In this disgraceful
Never-to-be-done deed.
The one who deceitfully
Made the ācārya
Lay down his weapons –

14 I will make the earth
Drink the blood today
Of that rājā of dharma!
By all my *iṣṭapūrta*-merits,
I swear this, O Kauravas!

15 I will not live
If I do not slay
All the Pāñcālas!
I will spare no effort
In killing the Pāñcālas.

16 Fair means
Or foul means –
Kill him I will,
The vile Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

17 O Kaurava!
Only after the Pāñcālas
Have been exterminated,
Will I find peace.
O lion-among-men!
People want sons

18 For their own welfare now
And in the hereafter.
But my father
Was forlorn
And friendless

19 In my lifetime –
The lifetime of a son
As strong as a mountain,
A son who was
Also his disciple!
Shame
on my celestial weapons!
Shame
on my two arms!
Shame
on my valour!

20 To have a son
like me –
And to suffer the insulft
of being seized
by the hair!
O most excellent
of the Bharatas!
I will now
do my best

21 To clear the debt
I owe my father
Who is now
In the other world.
Granted
that a noble person
never indulges
in his own praise –

22 But unable
to tolerate
my father's slaughter,
I praise myself.
Today the Pāṇḍavas
and Janārdana-Krishna
will witness
the thrust of my prowess.

23 I will wipe out the armies today
Like the cosmos crushed at yuga-end.
Neither gods nor Gandharvas
Neither anti-gods nor rākṣasas,

24 Nor the bravest
Of bull-brave humans
Will have the power
To stop me as I ride
In my chariot today.
There is no one
In the world to equal
Me or Arjuna
In weapons-expertise.

25 I shall penetrate
The enemy ranks
And stand in the centre
Like the blazing sun
And release
My celestial weapons
Like incinerating sunrays.

26 In today's mahā-battle
My arrows will slice through
The Pāṇḍava ranks
And vindicate my valour.

27 O rājā!
Today the warriors
Will see all the directions
Shrouded by my sharp arrows
Like torrential rain-showers.

28 With my volleys of arrows
I will exterminate
My fiercely roaring enemies
Like a storm uprooting trees.

29 Neither dreadful-deed-doer
Bībhatsu-Arjuna knows the weapon
Nor Janārdana-Krishna
Nor Bhīma
The twins Nakula and Sahadeva
Nor rājā Yudhiṣṭhira

30 Nor wicked-ātmaned Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Nor Śikhaṇḍin nor Sātyaki
That I plan to use.
O Kaurava! Only I know
How to operate it.

31 A long time ago
Nārāyaṇa visited
My father.
My father praṇāma-ed him
In the prescribed manner,
And offered gifts,
Revering him
With Brahma-rūpa Vedic praise.

32 Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa
Accepted the offerings
And gave him a boon.
The boon father accepted
Was the incomparable
Nārāyaṇa-missile.

33 O rājā!
The excelling Divinity
Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa
Said:
'No man will be your equal
In battle.

34 But, Brahmin, remember:
Use it only
With the greatest care,
For this missile
Will return only
After it has killed
Whoever it targets.

35 *Prabhu*!
Powerful one!
There is no one
It cannot kill.
Even the unkillable
It will kill.
Do not use it recklessly.

36 A chariot-hero
Who leaves his chariot,
A soldier who lays down
His weapons,
A soldier who pleads for mercy,
A soldier who surrenders –

37 This mahā-missile
Must not be used
Against any of them,
O foe-tormentor.
Whoever with this missile
Targets victims who
Do not deserve
To be killed,
Himself becomes
The missile's victim.'

38 My father received
The missile from Nārāyaṇa,
And passed it on to me.
I will wipe out
The Pāṇḍavas, Pāñcālas and Kekayas

39 With it on the battlefield
Like Śacī's husband Indra
Routing the anti-gods.
Taking whatever shape I will
Them to take, my arrows,

40 O Bharata,
Will seek out my foes
No matter where they are
Or how bravely they fight.
I will remain steady
And harass my enemies with rocks.

41 After receiving the missile,
My father had advised me:
'With this weapon's
Multiple showers of arrows
You can annihilate
All your enemies.

42 With this weapon
You will blaze forth
In glory
Unsurpassed.'
These were the words
Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa
Said to my father before leaving
For his celestial abode.

43 Today I will devastate
Mahā-chariot-heroes
With iron-beaked bird-arrows,
With *paraśva*-hatchets
Sharp and heavy,
And many other weapons.
Do not doubt this.

44 I am a foe-tormentor.
With the Nārāyaṇa mahā-missile
I will destroy my foes,
I will rout the Pāṇḍavas.

45 My friend,
I tell you:
That hater
Of Brahmins and gurus,
That blot
On the Pāñcāla race –
Dhṛṣṭadyumna –
Will not escape
With his life today."

46 These words
Of Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Restored the confidence
Of the Kaurava ranks.
Their excellent warriors
Blew their mahā-conches.

47 *Bheri*-kettledrums
And *dindima*-drums –
Thousands of them –
Began beating.
The battlefield trembled
With horses' hooves thudding
And chariot-wheels clattering.

48 The tumultuous clamour
Reverberated
In the sky
The inter-space
And earth.
Hearing that rain-cloud-like-
Thunder, the Pāṇḍavas,

49 All of them
Excellent chariot-heroes,
Met for consultation.
As for Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman,
O Bharata,
He touched water
In *vāyurpaspṛśya*-purification,

50 And invoked
The celestial missile –
The Nārāyaṇa.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED NINETY-SIX

1 *Prabhu!* Lord!
(continued Sañjaya)
When the Nārāyaṇa missile
Was invoked,
Winds blew, scattering water-drops,
And thunder boomed
In a cloudless sky.

2 The earth shook
The oceans swelled
Sea-streaming rivers
Reversed their flow.

3 O Bharata!
Mountain peaks split
And toppled.
Flocks of deer sped past,
Keeping the Pāṇḍavas
On their right.

4 Darkness blanketed
The earth.
The sun dimmed.
Flesh-eating animals
Rejoiced
And roamed the battlefield.

5 O lord of men!
Gods
Dānavas
Gandharvas
Were terrified
By nature's mahā-convulsions,
And asked each other,
"What is all this?"

6 O lord of men!
All the rājās panicked
With fear and worry,
Such was the impact
Of seeing the mahā-horrendous
Missile of Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman.

7 "Sañjaya," said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"I know that Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman,
Unable to endure the slaughter
Of his father,
Rallied his wavering soldiers.

8 What I would like
To know is:
What plans did
The Pāṇḍavas devise
To protect Dhṛṣṭadyumna
When they found that
The Kauravas had regrouped?"

9

O rājā!
(replied Sañjaya)
Yudhiṣṭhira witnessed
The initial rout
Of the Dhṛtarāṣṭra army.
Then, heaving the tumult,
He said to Arjuna:

10

"When ācārya Droṇa
Was killed by Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Like the mahā-anti-god Vṛtra
Liquidated
By thunderbolt-wielding Indra,

11

Our enemies,
O Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
Realised all chances
Of victory were lost,
And they fled.
Their only thought
At that time
Was how to save themselves.

12

Wheel-protectors killed
Chariots running wild
Pennants and war-flags
And umbrellas shredded
*Kūbara*-chariot-poles smashed

13

Chariot-boxes overturned
Yokes and axles and wheels
Broken –
And their warriors
Grievously wounded
Dragged behind them

14

Some kicked their horses
With bare feet
In sheer terror;
Others abandoned their chariots
And fled on foot.

15 Others fled, chased by arrows,
On the backs of their elephants.
Others fled, hanging on horseback,
Clutching at saddles.

16 The terrified arrow-pierced
Elephants fled
In all directions.
Without weapons,
Without coats-of-mail,
Soldiers toppled off mounts,

17 And mounts and riders
Were crushed and mangled
Under the fellies of chariots.
Warriors fled in fear
Helter-skelter, screaming,
'*Tāta*! My loved one!
My son!'

18 So distraught were they
With grief,
So drained
Their energy,
They could not
Even recognise
Each other.

19 Placing their seriously wounded
Sons
Fathers
*Sakhā*-friends
Brothers
In their chariots
They removed the coats-of-mail
Of the injured
And dressed their wounds.

20 With the enemy
In such chaos
After the death of Droṇa,
All the soldiers fleeing,
Who is it
Who rallied them round?
If you know it,
Tell me.
The neighing
Of horses
And trumpeting of elephants

21 Joins the rattle
Of chariots and creates
A mahā-cacophony.
The fearsome noise
Of the oceanic army
Of the Kauravas

22 Increases every moment
And makes the soldiers
Of my army shudder.
This horripilating
Horrible tumult
You hear around you

23 Will shatter the three worlds
And Indra himself, I think.
It sounds like the roar
Of thunderbolt-wielding Indra.

24 It must be Vāsava-Indra helping
The Kauravas after Droṇa's death.
Hearing this roar, our bull-brave
Heroes horripilate with fear,

25 O Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
Such is its ferocity.
Who is this mahā-
Chariot-hero who
Is rallying the Kauravas

26 Who is like the lord-
Of-the-gods Indra himself?"
Arjuna replied:
"The hero depending
On whom the Kauravas
Have stabilised their ranks,

27 And are blowing
Their conches and shouting
Their war-cries,
About whom,
O rājā,
You have doubts
As to who he might be
Coming so soon after weapon-less
Guru Droṇa's death,

28 The person who has
Regrouped the scattered
Dhṛtarāṣṭran warriors,
The mahā-muscled hero
Who walks with the gait
Of a musth elephant,
Who is modest
About his achievements,

29 Who in strength
is like Indra
and Viṣṇu
In anger
like Antaka
the god of doom
In wisdom
like Bṛhaspati
Who follows
the rules of justice
Who is
a mahā-chariot-hero,

30 Who can perform
formidable feats
Who encourages
the Kauravas
And inspires them
to fearlessness
At whose birth
Droṇa distributed
One thousand cows
to deserving Brahmins –

31 That roaring human
is Aśvatthāman
The hero who
at the instant of birth
Roared a neigh
like Ucchaiśravas'

32 That made
the earth tremble.
An invisible being then named him
Aśvatthāman the Horse-Voiced One.

33 O Pāṇḍava!
It is the same hero
Aśvatthāman
Who is roaring today.
And the helpless person
Who was slaughtered
By Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna –

34 An act of cruel,
Barbaric karma –
His protector
Is Aśvatthāman.
The Pāñcāla prince
Seized my guru
By his hair –

35 And Aśvatthāman
Proud of his manliness
Will not forgive this.
Seeking a kingdom,
You spoke a lie
To the guru.

36 You who are learned
In dharma –
How could you be guilty
Of such mahā-adharma?
You ill-fame will spread
In the three worlds
Forever and forever
Among all creatures
Animate and inanimate

37 For your involvement
In Droṇa's murder,
Like the stain on Rāma
For killing Vālī.
'Pāṇḍu's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Knows all dharmas,
He is my pupil,

38 He will never
Speak a lie.'
Yet you spoke a lie
Passing it as truth

39 When you said
To the ācārya
Under your breath,
'. . . the elephant. . .'
Which made him
Lay down his arms
And withdraw
From conscious activity.

40 O rājā!
You saw the brave one
Enfeebled and vulnerable,
Lost in grief over
The death of his son
He so dearly loved –

41 And you discarded
Eternal Dharma
And connived to kill
Your guru. Having killed
Your weapon-less guru
With such adharma,

42 Do what you can now
To protect Pṛṣata's son
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
From the flaming wrath
Of the ācārya's son Aśvatthāman
Who has vowed to kill him.
Meet your counsellors
And make plans.

43 All of us together
Will not be able to save
Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna.
For Aśvatthāman
Is like
A supernatural being.
He feels for all,
But when he hears about
His father dragged by the hair,
He will kill us all.

44 I kept shouting
At the top of my voice
'Do not kill
The ācārya!'
But Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Did not listen,
He cast aside dharma,
And the pupil
Killed his own guru!

45 The greater part
Of our life is over.
Very little is left.
That little now
Will be stained forever
By this deed
Of mahā-ādharma.

46 Dharma said so, love made it so:
He was like a father to us.
Yet we killed our guru – for what?
To enjoy briefly a kingdom.

47 O lord of the earth!
Dhṛtarāṣṭra gave
The kingdom's responsibility
To Bhīṣma and Droṇa
And all his sons.

48 Our enemies always
Revered Droṇa.
Despite that respect
He received from them,
Our guru loved us
Even more than
He loved his son.

49 It's because of you
And because of me
That he laid down
His arms in battle.
Had he fought,
Even Indra of a hundred sacrifices
Could not have defeated him.

50 This is the ācārya
Whom we have betrayed
For the pleasures
Of a kingdom –
An ācārya who always
Wanted our welfare!

51 Aho!
What a mahā-crime is this!
What horrific karma!
Greedy for the pleasures
Of a kingdom,
We have killed
The saintly Droṇa!

52 My guru Droṇa
Always believed that I –
Vāsava-Indra's son –
Could sacrifice father, son,
Brother, wife, even my life,
Because I loved him.

53 O rājā!
*Prabhu*! Lord!
Because I too
Lusted for a kingdom,
I failed to prevent
The murder of my guru.
Head lowered in shame,
I will go to hell.

54 He was a Brahmin.
He was old.
He was my ācārya.
He laid aside his weapons,
That mahā-muni.
For the sake of a kingdom,
I let him die.
I am responsible
For his death.
Better now for me
To die
Than to live."

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED NINETY-SEVEN

1 Mahārāja!
(continued Sañjaya)
The mahā-chariot-heroes
Listened to Arjuna
And kept silent.
Not one word,
Pleasant or unpleasant,
Did they speak.

2 O bull-brave Bharata!
Suddenly mahā-muscled Bhīma
Flared up in high anger.
He rebuked
Kuntī's son Arjuna:

3 “Pārtha-Arjuna!
You preach dharma
Like an ascetic in a forest
Or a Brahmin of dogmatic vows
Who never punishes anyone.

4 A Kṣatriya is one
Who protects himself
And others from harm,
Who is chivalrous
To women
And to all who are good,
And thus gains
Dharma
Fame
And prosperity.

5 You have all the guṇas
Of a Kṣatriya,
You have accepted
Family responsibility,
It does not become you
To speak so childishly.

6 In valour, Kuntī's son,
You are like Śacī's husband Indra.
The ocean stays within its shores,
You abide by the rules of dharma.

7 Why should anyone
Not offer you pūjā –
You who have forgotten
Thirteen long years
Of bitterness and hatred,
And have become so fond
Of the rules of dharma?

[VII:197:8-12]

Transcreated by P. Lal

8

*Tāta*! Dear one!
How wonderful,
How fortunate
That today you
Cherish sva-dharma!
O Acyuta!
You who never fail
In values!
How wonderful!
How fortunate
That your mind
Is so devoted
To never harming others.

9

You who are
So devoted to dharma,
Do you realise
Your kingdom was stolen
By adharma?
Do you remember
How you enemies
Molested Draupadī
In the sabhā?

10

We were driven out
To thirteen years
In the forest
Wearing tree-bark and deerskin.
Did we deserve that?

11

O spotless one!
These injustices deserved anger,
But I kept silent.
When Kṣatriya-dharma is weak,
Everything gets tolerated.

12

But today
I remember
All their deeds of adharma,
I remember the way
They stole our kingdom,
And with your help
I plan to kill them all.

13 Remember what you
Had said earlier?
'Let us fight!'
So we gathered our forces
To fight.
And now you ridicule us!

14 You have no interest
In your sva-dharma.
What you said
Was all lies.
We are the aggrieved, yet
You shift the blame on us.

15 O foe-crusher!
You are rubbing salt
On our wounds.
With your arrowy words
You are ripping open
My heart.

16 You and I
Both deserve praise.
It is adharma
On your part
Not to praise
Yourself or me.
Why can't you see this,
You who know dharma so well?

17 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
Vāsudeva-Krishna is here,
Yet you praise
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Who is not one-sixteenth
Of what you are!

18 Aren't you ashamed
Exposing your own weaknesses?
I can tear apart
This earth in anger,
I can shatter
A mountain

19 As I whirl my heavy
Gold-ornamented mace,
I can become
A terrifying tempest
Toppling trees
On tall mountains.

20 Pārtha-Arjuna!
Anti-gods
Nāgas
Rākṣasas
Humans –
Let them all come
With Indra in command –
I will kill them all.

21 Invincibly valiant
Bull-brave Arjuna!
You know me,
Your brother,
You know my strength.
Why are you afraid
Of Droṇa's son?

22 Doer-of-dreadful-deeds
Bībhatsu-Arjuna!
If you like,
You can stay here
With your other brothers
And watch me, mace in hand,
Single-handed
Finish off Aśvatthāman."

23 Like Hiraṇyakaśipu
In the distant past
Angrily upbraiding Hari-Viṣṇu,
The Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Said to Pārtha-Arjuna:

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24 "Doer-of-dereadful-deeds
Bībhatsu-Arjuna!
The ancient wise sages
Have laid down the duties
Of the twice-born:
Conducting sacred sacrifices,
Teaching,
Giving in charity,
Accepting gifts at yajñas,
Performing yajñas.

25 The sixth duty
Is to study the Vedas.
Which of these duties
Did Droṇa.
Whom I killed, observe?

26 He left his sva-dharma
And accepted the dharma of a Kṣatriya.
He used inhuman missiles
To slaughter us.

27 Pārtha-Arjuna!
If a man who
Professes to be a Brahmin
Uses māyā to harm others,
And himself
Becomes vulnerable,
What is so wrong
If someone else
Uses māyā-deceit?

28 If my punishing Droṇa
Makes Droṇa's son
Lose his temper
And bellow his rage,
How does that affect me?

29 Nothing so remarkable
That he will be the cause
Of the doom of the Kauravas,
For he cannot save them.

30 And now
You come forward
And preach dharma
And accuse me
Of the slaughter
Of my guru!
Don't you know
The reason I sprang
Out of the sacred fire
And took birth
As the Pāñcāla prince
Was to kill Droṇa?

31 Dhanañjaya-Arjuna!
Tell me:
How can you call
That man Kṣatriya
Or Brahmin who
On the battlefield
Treats ill-deed and good deed
As the same?

32 Tell me:
Why should we
Not use any means
In our power
To kill a person
Who in blind anger
Hurls the Brāhma-missile
On those who are unfamiliar
With the Brāhma-missile?
Tell me,
O most excelling mortal!

33 Those who know dharma
Say that a person
Who discards dharma
Is like poison.
You, Arjuna,
Who know what
Is dharma-and-artha,
Why do you blame me?

34 Doer-of-dreadful-deeds
Bībhatsu-Arjuna!
Because he was cruel,
I surprised him
In his chariot,
And I killed him.
Why do you
Condemn me?
Why don't you
Congratulate me?

35 Yes, Pārtha-Arjuna,
I severed Droṇa's head.
I severed a head
That flamed
Like the Kāla-fire
Of final doom,
Like a dreadful sun,
Like poison.
Why don't you praise me for this?

36 I severed the head
Of one who preferred
To target my relatives
And my friends
As his victims
And none others,
Yet the fever
Of my revenge
Has not abated!

37 Remember
How you hurled
The head of Jayadratha
Is the land
Of the Niṣādas?
That I did not
Fling Droṇa's head
In the same way –
This is what hurts me,
It hurts me
To my very core.

38 I have heard,
Arjuna,
That not to kill
An enemy
Is adharma.
After all,
Is it not
A Kṣatriya's dharma
To kill
Or be killed
On the battlefield?

39 Son of Pāṇḍu!
Droṇa was my enemy.
It was my dharma
To kill him.
As it was your duty
To kill your father's *sakhā*-friend,
Brave Bhagadatta.

40 When you killed
Your Pitāmaha
Grandsire Bhīṣma,
You did not think
It went against
Your dharma.
But when I kill
A wicked enemy,
You say it is not
An act of dharma.

41 Pārtha-Arjuna!
Do not speak
To me like this.
I bend my head
Before you,
Like an elephant
Who lies down
And allows friendly humans
To climb upon
His back.

42 And look!
Arjuna,
I forgive you
The bitter words
You have spoken
Against me.
I tolerate this
For Draupadī's sake
And for the sake
Of her sons –
And for no other reason.

43 The enmity
Between me
And ācārya Droṇa
Is a family bitterness –
A long-standing matter.
Everyone knows this.
How is it
That the Pāṇḍavas
Do not?

44 Arjuna!
The eldest son
Of Pāṇḍu
Is not a liar.
Nor am I
So guilty of adharma
As you think.
Droṇa was wicked:
He harmed his pupils.
So I killed him.
Now –
Get ready to fight,
And to win."

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED NINETY-EIGHT

1 "The mahā-ātmaned master
Of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas,
The expert in bowcraft
And at the same time modest,

2 By whose grace
So many bull-bravė heroes
Displayed marvellous feats,
So marvellous
So superhuman
Even gods and anti-gods
Could not perfrom them –

3 Such was Droṇa.
And the mean-atmaned
Doer of wicked karma,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Who insulted his guru –

4 And not one Kṣatriya
Objected!
Shame
On these spineless Kṣatriyas!
Shame
On their lack of anger!

5 What I want
To know, Sañjaya,
Is this:
What did the sons
Of Pṛthā-Kuntī,
The brilliant-in-bowcraft rājās
And others say
After listening
To the Pāñcālas prince?"

6 Listening to the words
Of the cruel-karma son
Of Drupada,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
All the rājās,
O lord of the earth,
Kept silent
(replied Sañjaya).

7 Only Arjuna
Kept glancing sideways
With tear-filled eyes
At Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Sighing heavily
And muttering, "Shame! Shame!"
Yudhiṣṭhira
Bhīma
The twins Nakula and Sahadeva
And Krishna –
All of them stood there

8 Shamefacedly.
O rājā!
It was Sātyaki who spoke first.
"Is there no one here
Who has listened
To this wicked man

9 Speaking such uncivilised
Inauspicious words
Who will come forward
And quickly kill him?
All the Pāṇḍavas here
Condemn your heinous deed,

10 Like Brahmins condemning
A *śvapāka*-outcaste son
Of a Cāṇḍāla outcaste and a Brahmin girl.
It is an evil karma.
You will be condemned
By all good people
For this mahā-crime.

11 Are you not ashamed
To face this assembly
Of noble people
And speak the way you do?
Why didn't your tongue
Slice into a thousand pieces,
Why didn't your head explode?

12 Why were you not
Struck down for this
Act of adharma
Of abusing your guru?
You deserve the condemnation
Of Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons
And the Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis

13 For the way you boast
After doing what is
A despicable karma.
First the heinous deed
And on top of that
You abuse your guru!

14 Surely you deserve
To die for this!
Not a single moment more
Of life for you!
Scoundrel!
Who but you could even think

15 Of seizing
A dharmātmā guru
By his hair
And butchering him?
Seven generations
Of your family
Before and after

16 Will lose their glory
And go to hell
Because a disgraceful wretch
Like you was born to them.
Blaming Arjuna for Bhīṣma's death
Is pointless,

17 Because mahā-ātmaned Bhīṣma
Willed his death to be
The way it happened.
To blame for Bhīṣma's death
Is the vile-deed-doer Śikhaṇḍin,
Your uterine brother.

18 There are no worse
Vile-deed-doers
On this earth than
The sons of the Pāñcāla king.
Everyone knows your father
Had Śikhaṇḍin for son
To kill Bhīṣma.

19 He brought up Śikhaṇḍin
For the sole purpose
Of ensuring the death
Of mahā-ātmaned Bhīṣma.
Departing from dharma, the Pāñcālas
Are murdering friends and gurus.

20 You and your brother
Śikhaṇḍin have become
The laughing stocks
Of good and noble people.
If ever again
You utter such words
In my presence,

21 I will smash your head
With a mace like a thunderbolt.
Just seeing a Brahmin-killer
Like you, people
Will go to the sun

22 For penance-purification
For the guilt that attaches
To the murderer
Of a Brahmin.
Utterly despicable Pāñcāla!
By reviling my guru

23 And then
My guru's guru,
Are you not ashamed?
Wait! Wait!
Have the courage
To let me strike you
Just once with my mace,

24 And I will let you
Strike me
As many times
As you like with yours."
Sātyaki of the Sātvatas
Spoke these harsh words
To Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna

25 Who, enraged, replied
Equally harshly,
Though smiling:
"I hear you, I hear you,
O Mādhava-descendant; I forgive you.

26 The ignoble
And the impure
Are always ready
To accuse good people.
The world
Is full of praise for forgiveness –
But why should
Criminals be forgiven?

27 Forgive an evil-ātmaned criminal,
And he will say, 'I win!'
You are ill-behaved,
You are mean-ātmaned,
You are evil-intentioned.

28 Wicked from nail-tip
To head-top, blame-worthy,
Yet you blame others!
Lopping of Bhūriśravas' arm
While he sat in *prāya*-meditation

29 You killed him
Despire protests from others.
What could be more
Despicable than this?
I had already routed
Droṇa on the field
With my celestial missiles.

30 Then he laid aside his weapons,
And I killed him.
Tell me, cruel one,
What's so wrong in that?
Leaving aside his weapons,
Sitting down in *prāya*-meditation
Like an ascetic,

31 His arm chopped – Sātyaki,
The man who kills such a man,
How can he blame others' deeds?
When your valiant enemy
Was dragging you and kicking you,

32 What prevented you
From killing
Finest-of-men Bhūriśravas then?
It was only after
Pārtha-Arjuna had incapacitated him

33 That you decided
To move in for the kill,
And slew Bhūriśravas
The son of Somadatta –
A brave warrior.
In whichever part
Of the battlefield
Droṇa harassed the Pāṇḍavas,

34 I hurriedly drove there,
Shooting thousands of arrows.
When you are guilty
Of a deed that becomes
Only a low-caste *cāṇḍāla*,

35 What gives you
The right to use
Such vulgar language
Against me?
O defiler of the Vṛṣṇi race!
You are the one
Of vile karma,
Not me.

36 You are the storehouse
Of evil!
Don't you ever dare blame me!
Keep your mouth shut!
Never say such things again!

37 It was mean of you
To speak to me
As you did.
If foolishly you ever
Speak harshly to me,

38 I will use my arrows
And speed you to the realm
Of Vaivasvata
The god of death.
Fool!
Dharma alone
Is never enough
To defeat an enemy.

39 Let me give you
A list of the deeds
Of adharma so far.
A long time ago,
Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira
Was a victim of adharma.

40 Sātyaki!
It was adharma
To disrobe Draupadī.
The forest-exile
Of the Pāṇḍavas
With Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī,

41 O *bāliśa*,
You silly one,
And the seizure
Of all their possessions,
Were all acts of adharma,
The Madra-rājā Śalya
Was seduced away from us
By adharma.

42 Subhadrā's young son
Abhimanyu
Was slaughtered
By adharma.
And we Pāṇḍavas –
We used adharma to kill
Foe-city-destroying Bhīṣma.

43 You who know dharma so well,
You used adharma
To kill Bhūriśravas.
The Pāṇḍavas and their enemies
In this war,

44 O Sātyaki of the Sātvatas,
Have both used adharma
To suit their convenience
And ensure their victory,
Though all of them
Know all about dharma.
What perfect dharma is,
Is hard to know.
Equally hard to know
Is what is adharma.

45 Carry on fighting the Kauravas.
Don't be too eager
To go to the realm
Of the spirits
Of your ancestors
By quarrelling with me."
Listening
To these cruel and ignominious words,

46 Illustrious Śrimān Sātyaki
Trembled all over.
Eyes copper-red with anger,
Sātyaki lifted a mace

47 After placing his bow
In his chariot,
And sighing heavily
Like a snake
He rushed at the Pāñcāla prince
Dhṛṣṭadyumna, shouting:

48 "No more harsh words
For me!
You deserve to die.
I will kill you!"
Seeing mahā-powerful Sātyaki
Angrily and vengefully

49 Rushing at Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Like roused Antaka the god of death,
Mahā-powerful Bhīma,
At a hint from Vāsudeva-Krishna,

50 Leapt from his chariot
And gripped
Both the arms of Sātyaki.
Bursting with anger,
Powerful Sātyaki
Kept advancing,

51 Dragging Bhīma
Who was desperately
Trying to restrain him.
But Bhīma stood firm,
And the bull-brave
Śini-descendant Sātyaki

52 Was brought to a stop
Six steps later,
Jumping down from his chariot,
By Sahadeva.

53 Sahadeva said gently to struggling Sātyaki:
"Dear lion-among-men!
At this time
We have no friends
Dearer to us

54 Than the Andhakas
The Vṛṣṇis
And the Pāñcālas.
Indeed,
The Andhakas
And Vṛṣṇis also,
Specially

55 Krishna,
Have no closer friends
Than us.
O Vṛṣṇi-descendant,
The Pāñcālas also,
Even if they search
Ocean-end to ocean-end,

56 Will not find friends
Dearer to them
Than the Pāṇḍavas and Vṛṣṇis.
You are such a friend
To us, as you know.

57 And as you are to us,
We are to you.
You who know all dharmas,
Keep in mind
The dharma of friends
And of friendship.

58 O bull-brave Śini hero!
Turn your anger away
From Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna.
Be calm.
Forgive Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
And let Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Forgive you.

59 We all seek
Forgiveness.
What can be greater
Than forgiveness?"
O respectworthy monarch!
While Sahadeva was pacifying
Śini's grandson Sātyaki,

60 The Pāñcāla-rājā's son
Dhṛṣṭadyumna smiled
And said:
"Bhīma! Let him go.
Let Śini's grandson go.
He is so proud
Of his war-prowess –

61 So let him come
And clash with me –
Let the wind clash
With the mountain!
I'll cure his war-fever
With my sharp arrows!

62 Son of Kuntī!
I'll put an end
To his war-śraddhā
And his life too.
But this is not the time
To do this. I have
On my head

63 The heavy responsibility,
The mahā-task
Entrusted to me
By the sons of Pāṇḍu.
The Kauravas are advancing.
Phalguna-Arjuna alone
Will be facing them
On the battlefield.

64 In the meantime,
I could slice Sātyaki's head
With my arrows.
Who does he think I am –
One-armed Bhūriśravas?

65 Let him go!
Set him free!
Either I kill him
Or he kills me!"
Hearing these words
Of the Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Sātyaki, heaving snake-sighs,

66 Still in Bhīma's grip,
Struggled to free himself.
The two magnificent-muscled
Heroes grappled
Like two snorting bulls.

67 In the meantime,
O respectworthy monarch,
Vāsudeva-Krishna
And Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
Did their best
And with mahā-efforts
Restrained the two.

68 The eyes
Of both combatants
Were copper-red
With anger.
After restraining them,
The bull-brave Kṣatriya heroes
Advanced to meet
Their advancing foes.

## SECTION ONE HUNDRED NINETY-NINE

1 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
(continued Sañjaya)
Began his systematic slaughter
Of enemies,
Like Antaka the god of doom
At *yugānta* yuga-end
Consuming all creatures
Created by Kāla
The Spirit of Cosmic Time.

2 War-flags the trees
Weapons the peaks
Dead elephants the huge boulders
Horses the *kiṁpuruṣa*-mongrels
Bows the entangling creepers

3 Flesh-eating beasts the screaming birds
Ghosts the hosts of yakṣas –
Such was the mountain of corpses
Of enemies killed by his *bhalla*-arrows.

4 Bull-among-men
Aśvatthāman roared
With great ferocity
And repeated his vow
To your son Duryodhana:

5 "Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Donned a mask of dharma
And tricked the war-ready ācārya
Into laying aside his weapons.

6 So I will annihilate
His entire army
In front of his eyes.
I will pierce their ranks
And wipe out the vile
Pāñcāla Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

7 I vow this: If they face me,
I will exterminate them.
Order the soldiers
To return and re-group."

8 As advised by Droṇa's son
Your son Duryodhana
Roared his lion-cry
To inspire his soldiers,
And ordered them to return
To battle-formation.

9 O rājā!
What followed was
A dreadful clash
Between the Kaurava
And Pāṇḍava armies
Like two swelling oceans
Colliding.

10 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Inspired and rallied the Kauravas
Against the Pāñcālas and Pāṇḍavas
Brimming with confidence
After Droṇa's death.

11 Lord of the earth!
What a mahā-clash
It was between
Two massive armies
Both infuriated
Both inspired
Both seeking victory.

12 O Indra-among-rājās!
The clash between
The Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas
Was like mountain
Mounting a mountain,
Ocean pouncing
On ocean.

13 Ecstatically
The Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas
Beat ten thousand
*Bheri*-kettledrums, and blew
A thousand conches.

14 It was mahā-wonderful!
More than mahā-wonderful –
The cacophony
That reverberated
On the field of battle
From your army's ranks –
Like the noise of
The churning of an ocean.

15 Invoking
The Nārāyaṇa-missile,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Targeted the armies
Of the Pāṇḍavas
And the Pāñcālas.

16 Suddenly
The sky was choked
With thousands of fire-
Tipped arrows like snakes
With flaming fangs
Descending on the Pāṇḍavas.

17 O rājā!
Like sunrays flooding the universe,
In a flash
The ten directions,
The sky
And the armies
Were flooded with arrows
In that mahā-clash.

18 Mahārāja!
In the cloudless sky
There suddenly appeared
Mollen black iron balls
Like swirling clusters of planets.

19 O bull-brave hero!
Two-and four-wheeled
*Śataghni*-fire-missiles,
Countless maces, dazzling razor-
Edged *cakras* also materialised.

20 The Pāṇḍavas
The Pāñcālas
And the Sṛñjayas
Were gripped with fear
When they saw the sky
Choked with the multitudes
Of these weapons

21 O lord of men!
The more the Pāṇḍava
Mahā-chariot-heroes
Defended themselves,
The more fierce and numerous
Became the weapons.

22 *Prabhu*! Lord!
Like fire crackling
Through dry grass
In summer,
The weapons consumed
The Pāṇḍava armies.

23 The Nārāyaṇa-missile
Swept through
The Pāṇḍava ranks
Like an all-encircling conflagration.

24 Lord! *Prabhu*!
As the intensity
Of the celestial missile
Kept increasing,
And the Pāṇḍava ranks
Began to get decimated,
Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira panicked.

25 He saw his soldiers
Scattering
War-shocked,
He saw Pārtha-Arjuna
Standing still,
Passive,
And he said:

26 "Dhṛṣṭadyumna!
Take the Pāñcāla army
And leave this place.
Leave now!
And, Sātyaki, you too.
Go!
Go now!
Take the Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas
And leave!

27 Dharmātmā Vāsudeva-Krishna
Can look after himself.
He looks after
The worlds' welfare.
He certainly knows
What's best for him.

28 I order you –
All soldiers here –
You will not fight!
I and my brothers today
Will enter a blazing fire.

29 We have crossed
The ocean of Bhīṣma
And Droṇa – an ocean
That terrifies the timid –
But today we will drown
In a calf-hoof of water
Called Aśvatthāman
Son of Droṇa.

30 Whatever
The doer-of-dreadful-deeds
Bībhatsu-Arjuna
Wishes for me –
Let that hapen.
For indeed I am guilty.
I was involved
In the slaughter
Of ācārya Droṇa
Who always had
Our welfare in mind.

31 But with the help
Of ruthless warriors
This venerable Droṇa
Killed Subhadrā's helpless son
Abhimanyu,
A boy, a novice
Who knew very little
Of the art of warfare.

32 This venerable Droṇa
And his son Aśvatthāman
Said not a word
When Kṛṣṇā-Draupadī,
Dragged in the sabha,
Asked him about her status
As a slave-maid.

33 This venerable Droṇa
Kept his word
And gave mahā-assistance
To the Sindhu-rājā Jayadratha
Who wanted to kill Arjuna.

35 Desiring victory,
We attacked.
The venerable Droṇa
Blocked the door
Of our battle-formation.
No matter how hard we tried,
Our warriors failed to dislodge him.

36 Because Satyajit was fighting
For victory for me,
Venerable Droṇa used his Brāhma-missile
To wipe out the Pāñcāla ranks.

37 When we were sent into forest-exile –
An act of adharma –
Dispossessed of our kingdom –
The venerable Droṇa
Told us to remain calm,
But did not side
With those of our friends
Who wished our welfare.

38 And I have connived
To kill such a loving and caring man!
For his sake,
I and my brothers
Will embrace death."

39 While Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira
Was saying this,
Krishna of the Dāśārhas,
Waving his hands, stopped
The soldiers, and said:

40 "Drop your weapons!
Leave your mounts
And vehicles!
This is the yoga
Advised by mahā-ātmaned Nārāyaṇa
To survive
The celestial missile.

41 Discmunt
From elephants
Horses
Chariots.
Discard your weapons.
Stand on the ground.
You will be safe.
The missile cannot harm you.

42 The more you try
To destroy this weapon,
The more will the Kauravas
Become powerful.

43 But if you discard
Your weapons,
And leave your mounts
And stand
On the bare ground,
And fold your hands
In *añjali*
And do *namaskāra,*
You cannot be harmed
On the field of battle.

44 But even if you
So much as think
Of combating this missile,
And try to hide
In the lowest realm
Of the seven below-ground hells
Of Rasātāla,
The missile will track you
And kill you."

45 O Bharata!
Hearing this advice
Of Vāsudeva-Krishna,
The Pāṇḍava warriors
Laid aside their weapons
And banished all thoughts
Of the celestial missile
From their minds.

46 O rājā!
Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma
Saw the soldiers
About to discard their weapons
And tried to enthuse them,
Saying:

47 “No warrior
Should discard his weapons!
I will neutralise the missile
Of Droṇa’s son Aśvatthāman
With my swift-flying arrows.

48 I will become Kāla
The Spirit of Cosmic Time
And with my gold-ornamented mace
I will pulversie
The weapons of
Droṇa’s son Aśvatthāman.

49 Who is there
In this world
To match my prowess?
Who can match
The glory
Of the radiant sun?

50 Look at my arms!
Round and strong
Like the trunk
Of a rājā-elephant!
They can topple down
Even the mountains
Of the Himālayas.

51 What man is there
Who has the strength
Of ten thousand elephants?
I do.
I am like Śakra-Indra
In heaven:
I have no equal.

52 And today you will see
How mighty my arms are,
How large my chest
When I neutralise
The incandescent weapon
Of Droṇa’s son
Aśvatthāman.

53 So what if there is none
To come forward
Against the Nārāyaṇa-missile?
Let the Kauravas
And the Pāṇḍavas see
How I deal with it!"

54 Arjuna said:
"Bhīma!
I have vowed
I will not use
My Gāṇḍīva bow
Against Brahmins
Cows
And the Nārāyaṇa-missile."

55 No sooner had Arjuna said this
Than foe-tormenting Bhīma
Sped towards Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
In a chariot
That rattled like thunder-
And dazzled like the sun.

56 Blowing loudly on his conch,
Slapping his arms,
Making the earth tremble,
Bhīma terrorised your armies.

57 Hearing the blare
of his conch
And the slapping
of his arms,
Your warriors
encircled him
And drowned him
with arrows.

58 In the blink of an eye,
Kuntī's son,
Energetic and puissant Bhīma,
With amazing dexterity
Shrouded Aśvatthāman
With a network of arrows.

59 Droṇa's son greeted the attack
With a smile,
And retaliated with a shower
Of flaming sharp mantra-charged arrows.

60 Pṛthā-Kuntī's son Bhīma
Was completely shrouded
By those arrows
Which scattered
Flaming golden sparks.
The entire field was covered
By those arrows
With snake-mouths
Spitting fire.

61 O rājā!
Bhīma on that battlefield
Looked like a hill
Flickering with fireflies
On a *saṁdhyā*-evening.

62 Mahārāja!
As soon as Bhīma fired his arrows
At Aśvatthāman's missile,
It expanded like a wind-fanned fire.

63 As the Nārāyaṇa-missile
Swelled
And kept swelling,
All the soldiers
Of the Pāṇḍava armies
Quaked in mahā-fear,
With the sole exception
Of Bhīma.

64 All the soldiers
Laid aside
Their weapons
And dismounted
From chariots
And elephants
And horses.

65 When the weapons
Were laid aside,
And all had dismounted,
The deadly missile sped
Towards Bhīma's head.

66 All the creatures
Exclaimed:
"Hai! Hai! –
Specially the Pāṇḍavas
When they saw
Bhīma engulfed
In the radiance
Of that missile.

## SECTION TWO HUNDRED

1 Seeing Bhīma engulfed
By the Nārāyaṇa-missile
(continued Sañjaya),
Dhananjaya-Arjuna
Fired his Vāruṇa-missile
As a counter-measure.

2 So swiftly did Arjuna shoot it,
And so completely was Bhīma
Provided its protection,
That no one realised when
Its ring of safety materialised.

3 Swamped in the radiance
Of the Nārāyaṇa-missile
Were the horses
And chariot and charioteer
Of Bhīma.
Such was the intensity
Of the radiance
That none dared
Even look at it.

[VII:200:4-9]

4 O rājā!
With the dropping of dusk
All the shining planets
Sweep towards Astāgiri
"The hills of the West";
Similarly Aśvatthāman's arrows
Sped towards Bhīma.

5 Respected one!
Enveloped by Aśvatthāman's arrows,
Bhīma, his chariot and charioteer
Seemed to be lapped by flames.

6 Like all moving
And unmoving creatures
Sweeping in the fire
Of final doom
Into the mouth
Of Vibhu-Brahmā
The Cosmos-Creator,
So did the arrows
Of the Nārāyaṇa-missile
Sweep towards Bhīma.

7 Like fire entering sun
And sun entering fire,
The radiance of the missile
Entered the radiance of Bhīma,
So none could tell
Bhīma from radiance.

8 Seeing the missile expanding
Near the chariot of Bhīma,
And Droṇa's son unopposed
Dominating the battlefield,

9 And the Pāṇḍava soldiers
Dazed and lost
Laying down their weapons,
And the mahā-chariot-heroes of Yudhiṣṭhira
Turning their faces away from battle,

Transcreated by P. Lal

10 Mahā-glorious Arjuna
And Vāsudeva-Krishna –
Heroic warriors both –
Leapt from their chariot
And ran towards Bhīma.

11 The supremely powerful heroes
Plunged into the radiance
Of the Nārāyaṇa-missile
Of Drona's son Aśvatthāman
With the help of māyā.

12 They were unscathed, both,
Because they were weaponless,
Because of the Vāruṇa-missile,
Because they were incredibly valiant.

13 Quickly, Nara-Nārāyaṇa
Arjuna-and-Krishna
Removed all the weapons
From Bhīma's chariot
To save him from the fury
Of the Nārāyaṇa-missile.

14 As he was being dragged
Out of his chariot,
Bhima roared mahā-loudly;
The louder he roared,
The intenser grew the radiance
Of the terrifying weapon
Of Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman.

15 Vasudeva's son Krishna
Said to Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma:
"Kuntī's son,
What is wrong with you?
Ordered
To stop fighting,
Why do you keep fighting?

16 If the Kauravas
Could have been defeated
By fighting them,
We and all these
Other bull-brave warriors
Would have kept fighting them.

17 All your soldiers
Have dismounted
From their chariots.
Son of Kuntī!
Take my advice –
Leave your chariot, quickly."

18 Saying this,
Krishna pulled Bhīma out of the chariot;
Bhīma's eyes were copper-red,
He was heaving snake-sighs.

19 The instant he left the chariot
And his weapons were removed,
The foe-consuming Nārāyaṇa-missile
Became tranquillised.

20 With the tranquillisation
Of the intolerable radiance
Of the missile,
All the main
And subsidiary quarters
Cleared.

21 Auspicious winds
blew
Animals and birds lay down
in peace
With the fearful missile
tranquil
Horses and other mounts
became relaxed.

22 O Bharata!
With the stilling
Of the missile's terrible radiance,
Intelligent Bhīma
Shone like the end-of-night
Rising sun.

23 With the Nārāyaṇa-missile tranquillised,
The remnant of the Pāṇḍava warriors
Recovered and stood ready
To complete their desire
To kill your sons.

24 Mahārāja!
Duryodhana saw
The missile stilled,
The Pāṇḍavas rallying
For fresh attack,
And he said:

25 "Aśvatthāman!
Quick!
Fire the missile again!
The Pāñcālas
Are determined to win,
And they have
Recovered and rallied."

26 O respected lord!
Aśvatthāman
Heard your son
And sighed
And said sadly:

27 "O rājā!
This missile
Cannot be recalled,
And cannot be used
A second time.
It rebounds on its second-time user
And kills him.
I know this for certain.

28 O lord of men!
You saw Vāsudeva-Krishna
Neutralise it.
If he had not done so,
All our foes
Would have been exterminated.

29 In war,
If it's defeat
Or death,
Then better death
Than defeat.
Our enemies
Have lost.
They are corpses.
They laid down
Their weapons."

30 Duryodhana said:
"Son of my ācārya!
You who are well-versed
In weapons of war!
Fine!
If you cannot
Re-employ this missile,
Kill those guru-slayers
With the other weapons
You have.

31 You
And three-eyed Śiva
Are infinitely powerful.
You possess
Celestial missiles.
If you aim to kill him,
Even anger-inflamed
Puraṁdara-Indra
Cannot escape death."

32 Dhṛtarāṣtra asked:
"Droṇa killed deceitfully,
And the Nārāyaṇa-missile
Rendered inoperative –
How did Aśvatthāman react
To Duryodhana's suggestion?

33 For he saw, did he not,
The son of Pṛthā-Kuntī
Freed from the fear
Of the Nārāyaṇa-missile
And preparing to attack?"

34 Lion's-tail-symbolled-
War-flagged Aśvatthāman
(replied Sañjaya)
Remembering the slaughter
Of his father
Fearlesslyand wrathfully
Attacked Pārṣata-Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

35 O bull-brave hero!
The bull-brave warrior
Aśvatthāman first
Assailed Dhṛṣṭadyumna.
With twenty small-sized *kṣudraka*-arrows,
And wounded him
With five more fierce shafts.

36 O rājā!
Dhṛṣṭadyumna. retaliated
By targeting Droṇa's flame-effulgent son
With sixty-three arrows.

37 Then, with twenty
Stone-sharpened
Golden-feathered
Extremely keen arrows
He wounded
Aśvatthāman's charioteer
And his four horses.

38 Roaring,
Making the earth tremble,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna pressed
His attack on Aśvatthāman,
Acting as if
He was ready to wipe out
The world's entire population.

39 O rājā!
Powerful and determined
Arms-expert Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Resolved to succeed
Or die
When he attacked Droṇa's son.

40 The finest of chariot-heroes,
Immeasurably self-confident
Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Rained a volley of arrows
On Aśvatthāman's head.

41 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Retaliated with arrows
That completely blanketed Dhṛṣṭadyumna
And remembering the way
His father was slaughtered,
He wounded his foe
With ten more arrows.

42 Slicing the bow
And shredding the war-flag
Of the Pāñcāla-rājā
With two razor-arrows,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Pressed his advantage
With additional shafts.

43 In that mahā-clash
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Isolated his enemy
From his horses, chariot and charioteer;
And, seething with anger,
Routed Dhṛṣṭadyumna's
Followers and protectors.

44 O lord of men!
The Pāñcāla ranks
Scattered and fled;
Such was their fear
That in their panic
They did not even
Look at each other.

45 Seeing the soldiers fleeing
And Dhṛṣṭadyumna in trouble,
Śini's grandson Sātyaki
Ordered his charioteer
To advance towards Aśvatthāman

46 With eight sharp arrows
He wounded Aśvatthāman.
With another volley
Of twenty arrows of miscellaneous make
Sātyaki wounded
His adversary afresh.

47 With four arrows
He wounded the charioteer
Of Aśvatthāman,
As well as his four horses,
Splintered his bow
And shredded his war-flag.

48 He slaughtered the horses
And shattered the chariot
Of his adversary,
Lacerating him in the chest
With twenty arrows.

49 O rājā!
The mahā-powerful Aśvatthāman,
Assailed in this manner,
Was so dazed
He did not know what to do.

50 With the guru's son
In this predicament,
Your mahā-chariot-hero son Duryodhana,
With Kṛpa, Karṇa
And others shrouded
The Sātvata Sātyaki
With a shower of arrows.

51 Duryodhana with twenty
Śaradvaṭa's son Kṛpa
With three,
Kṛtavarman with ten,
Karṇa with fifty,

52 Duḥśāsana with a hundred,
And Vṛṣasena with seven
Sharp arrows,
Shot from all sides,
Swiftly wounded Sātyaki.

53 O rājā!
Sātyaki retaliated
With incredible swiftness
By uncharioting
Those mahā-chariot-heroes
And forcing them
To turn their faces away
From the battlefield.

54 O bull-brave Bharata!
In the meantime
Aśvatthāman recovered,
But deep in grief
He was lost in thought
And kept heaving
Sorrow-stricken sighs.

55 Mounting another chariot,
Droṇa's foe-exterminating son
Aśvatthāman
Raced towards Sātyaki,
Shooting hundreds
Of arrows.

56 Sātyaki kept track
Of Bhāradvāja-Aśvatthāman
As he advanced.
Mahā-chariot-hero Sātyaki
Once again
Unchcharioted Aśvatthāman
And made him turn his face
Away from the battlefield.

57 O rājā!
Witnessing the prowess of Sātyaki,
The Pāṇḍavas
Blew loudly on their conches
And screamed leonine war-cries.

58 After unchariotіng
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
The truly valiant Sātyaki
Destroyed three thousand
Mahā-chariot-heroes
Of Vṛṣasena's army.

59 He killed fifteen thousand elephant
In the army
Of Vṛṣasena,
And fifty thousand horses
In Śakuni's army.

60 Mahārāja!
Droṇa's valiant son
Aśvatthāman, riding
A new chariot, rushed
Murderously at Sātyaki.

61 But Śini's foe-formenting
Grandson Sātyaki cruelly
And repeatedly assailed him
With sharp arrows.

62 Variously wounded
By the miscellaneous arrows
Of Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
The brilliant bowman
Son of Droṇa –
Aśvatthāman –
Though grievously injured,
Smiled and said:

63 "Śini's grandson!
I know you have
A soft corner
For that ācārya-murderer
Dhṛṣṭadyumna;
But I have him in my clutches –
And you too –
And you cannot save him.

64 O Śini descendant! I swear
By truth, by my tapasyā –
I will have no peace until
I kill all the Pāñcālas.

65 Go ahead –
Join the Pāṇḍavas!
Join the Vṛṣṇis!
No matter how strong they are –
I will wipe out
The Somakas also!"

66 Saying this,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Fired a sun-dazzling
Arrow at Sātyaki
The Sātvata descendant –
Like Hari-Indra
Hurling his thunderbolt
At Vṛtra.

67 It pierced the armour
And the body of Sātyaki,
And plunged in the earth
Like a hissing snake
Slithering inside its hole.

68 His armour pierced,
Bleeding profusely,
Like an elephant
Pricked incessantly
With a hook,
Sātyaki laid aside
His bow and arrows,

69 And drenched in blood
And enfeebled, he slumped
In the back of his chariot.
His charioteer swiftly drove him away
From where Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman was.

70 Foe-exterminating
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Lacerated the forehead
Of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
With a lovely-feathered
Depressed-knot arrow.

71 Still suffering from
An earlier wound,
The Pāñcāla prince Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
Weakened further,
Slumped in his chariot,
Clutching the flagstaff
For support.

72 O rājā!
Five Pāṇḍava chariot-heroes
Sped to rescue Dhṛṣṭadyumna
From Aśvatthāman's arrows.
He was like an elephant
Attacked by an infuriated lion.

73 The chariot-heroes were:
Diadem-decked Arjuna
Bhīma
Bṛhadkṣatra of the Pauravas
The Cedi prince
And the Mālava ruler Sudarśana.

74 Shouting "Hai! Hai!"
And brandishing their bows,
These brave heroes
Surrounded
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman.

75 From a distance
Of twenty paces,
Cautiously but accurately
Each fired five arrows
At Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Who was seething
With revenge.

76 But Droṇa's son
With a single volley
Of twenty-five poisoned arrows
Disintegrated all their arrows.

77 Droṇa's son targeted Bṛhadkṣatra
With seven sharp arrows,
Śudarśana with three,
Pārtha-Arjuna with one,
Vṛkodara-Bhīma with six.

78 O rājā!
These mahā-chariot-heroes
Singly and together
Targeted
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
With gold-feathered
Stone-sharpened arrows.

79 The prince of the Cedis
Wounded
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
With twenty arrows,
Pārtha-Arjuna wounded him
With eight, and the others
With three arrows each.

80 Droṇa's son wounded Arjuna
With six arrows,
Vāsudeva-Krishna with ten,
Bhīma with five,
The Cedi prince with four,
And the Mālava and
Paurava rulers
With two each.

81 Targeting Bhīma's charioteer
With six arrows,
And slicing his bow
And shredding his war-flag
With two arrows,
Shrouding Pārtha-Arjuna
With a shower of arrows,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Roared his leonine war-cry.

82 Droṇa's son continued
An incessant volley
Of arrows
In front and behind.
Those sleek fearful-looking
Needle-sharp arrows
Blanketed
The earth
The sky
And the main
And subsidiary quarters.

83 Fiercely energetic
The-equal-of-Indra-in-prowess
Aśvatthāman
Approached the chariot
Of Sudarśana
And with three arrows
Fired simultaneously
Sliced both
The Indra-war-flag-radiant arms
And the head
Of Sudarśana.

84 With the *śakti*-spear
Of his chariot
He wounded the Paurava,
And with his arrows
Demolished his chariot
Into small fragments,
Sliced his sandal-paste-smeared arms,
And with a *bhalla*-arrow
Beheaded him.

85 Nimble and swift
He next targeted
With flame-spitting arrows
The heroic young prince
Of the Cedis
Whose complexion
Had the soft glow
Of the blue lotus
And despatched him
And his horses
And his charioteer
To the realm of death.

86 Seeing the Mālava ruler,
The Paurava ruler,
And the Cedi prince killed
By Droṇa's son,
Pāṇḍu's son,

87 Mahā-muscled Bhīma,
Burned with anger.
With hundreds of sharp,
Snake-venomous arrows,

88 Foe-tormenting Bhīma
Blanketed
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman.
The mahā-energetic son of Droṇa
Neutralised
That shower of arrows,

89 And retaliated angrily
By wounding Bhīma
With sharp arrows.
Mahā-powerful
And mahā-muscled Bhīma

90 Sliced the bow
Of Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
With a razor-arrow
And wounded him
With another, feathered arrow.
Droṇa's son and Bhīma,
Both mahā-powerful
And renowned for valour,

91 Showered arrows
At each other
Like two rain-clouds
Pouring torrents,
For in the meantime
Droṇa's mahā-ātmaned son
Had discarded
His shattered bow

92 And readied another,
Targeting Bhīma
With feathered shafts.
Gold-feathered arrows,
Carved with Bhīma's name
And sharpened on stone,

93 Obscured
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
Like massive clouds the sun.
Similarly, Bhīma
Was obscured
By Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman

94 Swiftly shooting
Hundreds of thousands
Of depressed-knot arrows.
Shrouded
By the battle-brilliant
Son of Droṇa,

95 Mahārāja,
Bhīma was not
In the least perturbed.
An amazing feat!
Mahā-muscled Bhīma
Fired gold-ornamented

96 *Nārāca*-arrows
Of extreme sharpness –
Ten of them,
Each like the rod
Of Yama, god of death –
Which struck,
O venerable one,
Aśvatthāman's shoulder

97 And slid
Through his body
Like ants scurrying
Inside an anthill.
Grievously wounded
By Pāṇḍu's
Mahā-ātmaned son Bhīma,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman

98 Clutched
His flagstaff for support
And closed his eyes.
Then, O lord of men,
Quickly recovering,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,

99 Dripping blood
All over his body,
Seethed with sublime anger.
Deeply injured
By the mahā-ātmaned son
Of Pāṇḍu,

100 Mahā-muscled Aśvatthāman
Attacked the chariot
Of Bhīma.
Pulling his bowstring
Ear-taut,
With a tremendous burst
Of energy,

101 O Bharata,
He fired a hundred
Virulent-venomed
Snake-arrows
At Bhīma.

102 The son of Pāṇḍu deluged
Droṇa's son with arrows.
Splintering Bhīma's bow
With arrows, O mahārāja,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman

103 Angrily lacerated
Bhīma's chest
With sharp arrows.
Thirsting for revenge,
Bhīma
Readied another bow

Transcreated by P. Lal

104 And with five
Sharp arrows wounded
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman.
Like two clouds
At end of summer
The two warriors
Rained arrows
At each other,

105 Glaring at each other
With eyes copper-red
With anger.
With loud
And fierce palm-claps
They challenged each other,

106 Each trying
To outmanoeuvre
And outshine
The other.
Stretching to the full
His gold-decorated
Mahā-bow,

107 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Glared at Bhīma
Who was raining arrows
At him at close range.
Aśvatthāman dazzled
Like the sun at its height
In mid-autumn.

108 So swiftly did
He shoot his arrows,
One could not tell
When it left its quiver,
When nocked, when pulled,
When released.

109 Mahārāja!
When he pulled the bow
To its full,
It dazzled like fire,
An *alāta-cakra*!
It was
A flaming maṇḍala!
An incandescent circle!

110 And the arrows
That sped from that bow –
In hundreds and thousands –
They shrouded the sky
Like swarms of locusts!

111 Golden arrows!
Gory arrows!
Whizzing from the bow
Of Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman
They poured incessantly
On Bhīma's chariot.

112 O Bharata!
We were there,
We witnessed
Bhīma's
Incredible
Prowess
Strength
Valour
Power
Resolve.

113 He treated
The cloud-thick
Deluge of arrows
Falling on him
As a freak
End-of-summer drizzle;

114 And fiercely valiant Bhīma,
Eager to kill Droṇa's son
Retaliated with arrows like
A torrential monsoon downpour.

115 He looked handsome,
He looked magnificent –
Bhīma bending
His golden bow
On the battlefield –
A beautiful spectacle,
As beautiful as
The bow-of-Śakra-Indra,
The rainbow.

116 And from that bow
Sped hundreds and thousands
Of arrows
Shrouding their target –
The-glory-of-Drona,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman.

117 O venerable lord!
So thick were the swarms of arrows,
So densely packed,
The wind could not pass through them.

118 Mahārāja!
After this,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
Bent on killing Bhīma,
Targeted him
With sharp, oil-polished arrows.

119 But Bhīma
The superior bowman
Sliced each arrow
Into three pieces
In mid-air
And shouted:
"Wait! Don't move!"

120 Livid with anger,
Formidable Pāṇḍava Bhīma,
Bent on killing Aśvatthāman,
Once again
Released a shower
Of sharp arrows.

121 But
The weapons-mahā-expert Aśvatthāman
With the power
Of his māyā-magic,
Disintegrated the bow
Of Bhīma.

122 Infuriated,
He also destroyed
All the arrows of Bhīma
With a counter-shower
Of countless shafts.
His bow pulverised,
Formidable Bhīma
Aimed a terrifying
Chariot-*śakti*-spear

123 And hurled it swiftly
At the chariot
Of Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman.
Seeing it speeding
Like a mahā-meteor,
With sharp arrows

124 Droṇa's son intercepted it
And pulverised it,
Displaying
His remarkable dexterity.
In the meantime
Bhīma readied
An adamantine bow

125 And, smiling,
The wolf-waisted
Pāṇḍava Bhīma
Wounded Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
With a volley of arrows.
Mahārāja!
Bhīma's charioteer,
By Droṇa's son

126 Was wounded in the forehead
With a depressed-knot arrow.
Grievously wounded
By the powerful son of Droṇa,

127 The charioteer of Bhīma,
O rājā,
Lost consciousness.
The reins slipped
From his hands.
With the charioteer senseless,
The horses

128 Of Bhīma, O Indra-of-rājās,
Fled, while all the bowmen
Watched. Seeing Bhīma fleeing
In the runaway chariot,

129 Victorious Aśvatthāman joyfully
Blew loudly on his huge conch.
Pāṇḍu's son Bhīma
And all the Pāñcāla soldiers

130 Abandoned the chariot
Of Dhṛṣṭadyumna
And fled in fear in all directions.
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Chased them, shooting arrows

131 And slaughtering
The ranks
Of the fleeing Pāṇḍavas.
Hounded
On the battlefield
By Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
The lords of the earth,

132 O rājā,
Scattered in all directions,
Such was the terror
Inspired
By Droṇa's son.

## SECTION TWO HUNDRED ONE

1 Determined to defeat
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
(continued Sañjaya),
Kuntī's son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna
With incomparable skill
And confidence restored the morale
Of the fleeing soldiers.

2 O rājā!
The army reorganised
Through the efforts of Arjuna
And Govinda-Krishna.

3 Doer-of-dreadful-deeds
Bībhatsu-Arjuna
Rallied the remnants
Of the Somakas,
The Matsya warriors
And others, and faced
The Kauravas again.

4 Ambidexterous
Savyasācī-Arjuna
Swiftly confronted
Lion-tail-symbolled-
War-flagged Aśvatthāman
And said:

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5 “Your śakti
Skill
Valour
Manliness
Your love for the sons
of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
Your hatred for us

6 The peak of your energy –
Demonstrate all these
To me today!
Even Pṛsata’s son
Dhṛṣṭadyumna by himself
Is strong enough
To crush your pride.

7 Today
On the field of battle
You must face
The Pāñcāla prince
Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Who is like the fire
Of Kāla the final Doom
Who is like Antaka-Death
To his foes –
And you must face me
And Keśava-Krishna.
In battle today
I will crush your pride.”

8 “Sañjaya,”
said Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
The ācārya’s son
Aśvatthāman is strong
And respectworthy.
He love Dhanañjaya-Arjuna,
And mahā-ātmaned Arjuna
Loves him.

9 Never before did
The doer-of-dreadful-deeds
Bībhatsu-Arjuna
Speak harshly to him.
Why now does he speak
So bitterly to his friend?"

10 Sañjaya replied:
The young Cedi prince slaughtered,
Also slaughtered the Paurava Bṛhadkṣatra,
And the skilled in war-weapons
Sudarśana of the Mālavas,

11 Dhṛṣṭadyumna defeated,
Sātyaki defeated,
Even Bhīma defeated,
Stung to the marrow
By the sarcasm
Of Yudhiṣṭhira's rebuke,

12 Recalling all the sorrows
Inflicted earlier,
*Prabu*-lord,
The dreadful-deed-doer
Bhibatsu-Arjuna's heart
Broke.
He flamed with an anger
He never felt before.

13 That is the reason
For his unfortunate
Hurtful remarks
To Droṇa's son,
Remarks applicable
Only to a coward.

14 O king!
The brilliant bowman
Aśvatthāman heard
The marrow-piercing words
Of Pārtha-Arjuna,
And sighed heavily
In anger.

15 Burning
With exceeding wrath
Against Pārtha-Arjuna
And Krishna,
Valiant Droṇa's son stood
In his chariot,
Religiously slipped water,

16 And invoked the celestial
Āgneya-missile, difficult
Even for gods to destroy,
And carefully targeting
His visible and invisible foes,
The ācārya's son –

17 That slayer
Of hostile heroes –
Charging the missile
With mantras
Released it.
It dazzled like a pillar
Of smokeless fire.

18 A tumultuous shower
Of arrows descended
From the sky;
The incandescent shafts
Completely encircled
Pārtha-Arjuna.

19 Meteors
Fell
From the sky;
The directions
Lost their light;
Deep darkness drowned
The army divisions.

20 The Rākṣasas and Piśācas
Howled and roared;
Hot winds
Began to blow;
The heat of the sun
Diminished.

21 Crows
Started cawing
Horrendously
On all sides;
Clouds
Rumbled
And rained blood.

22 Peace
Abandoned
Birds
Beasts
Cows
And noble-vowed
Serene-minded mortals.

23 All the mahā-elements
Seemed to swirl
In confusion,
The sun seemed
To be whirling,
The three worlds swaying
As if with fever.

24 The nāga-serpents
Of the earth,
Impacted by the fury
Of the radiant missile,
Hissing fiercely
Entangled each other
Trying to escape.

25 O Bharata!
All the water-expanses
Began boiling,
And in the searing heat
There was no respite
For sea-life.

26 From all the quarters,
Primary and secondary,
From everywhere on earth,
Arrows
Swift as Garuḍa
Arrows
Swift as wind
Fell
In showers.

27 Like trees
Consumed by fire,
They toppled –
The foes of Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
Struck by thunder-arrows.

28 Scalded and trumpeting
In agony, huge-bodied
Mahā-elephants fled
In all directions, roaring
Like rumbling clouds.

29 O lord of the earth!
Other elephants too,
Terror-stricken,
Fled helter-skelter
In confused circles,
As if they were trapped
In a forest-fire.

30 O venerable lord!
O Bharata monarch!
Cavalry squadrons
And chariot-divisions
Were aflame
Like burning tree-tops.

31 Thousands
Of chariot-divisions
Were reduced to ashes
On the battlefield.
O Bharata!
The fearful fire-missile
Consumed the Pāṇḍava forces

32 Like the Saṁvartaka-fire
At the end of a yuga
Incinerating all creatures.
Seeing the Pāṇḍava forces
Consumed by fire
In that mahā-battle,

33 Your soldiers rejoiced,
O rājā,
And screamed
Their leonine war-cries.
Then suddenly,
O Bharata,
Thousands of drums
And other instruments

34 Were sounded
By your soldiers,
Now certain of victory.
All the *akṣauhiṇis*
Of the Pāṇḍavas, O rājā,
And Savyasācī-Arjuna himself,

35 Could not be seen
In the pitch darkness
That shrouded
The field of battle.
O rājā!
We had never seen,
We had never heard of

36 Any weapon resembling
The celestial missile
Invoked by Droṇa's son
Aśvatthāman.
Mahārāja!
Arjuna also invoked
The celestial Brāhma-missile

37 Created by Padma-yoni
Lotus-born Brahmā
As the perfect anti-missile
For all war-weapons.
In a flash,
The darkness evaporated,

38 Cool breezes blew,
The quarters cleared,
We saw
An incredible spectacle:
An entire *akṣauhiṇi*
Of the Pāṇḍavas,
Littering the field,

39 Burnt to a crisp
By the fatal radiance
Of the celestial missile
Of Aśvatthāman,
So mutilated that
They were unrecognisable.
The two brilliant bowmen
Arjuna and Keśava-Krishna

40 Emerged unscathed,
Like the moon and the sun
Simultaneously rising –
Not a scratch on the Gāṇḍīva-wielder
And Keśava-Krishna.

41 Pennants
War-flag
Horses
Axle-tree
Weapons
All intact –
They dazzled
On the battlefield
And instilled terror
In your soldiers.

42 The Pāṇḍava ranks
Burst into peals
Of ecstatic applause
With drums beating
And conches blaring.

43 Both armies thought Arjuna
And Keśava-Krishna had perished.
Seeing them reappear
So swiftly
Made them rejoice.

44 Uninjured and cheerful,
They kept blowing
Their splendid conches.
Seeing Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons
Rejoicing, your sons
Were upset.

45 O venerable one!
Seeing the mahā-ātmaned
Pair completely unharmed,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
Utterly dejected,
Said to himself,
"What is all this?"

46 O Indra-among-rājās!
Worried and disappointed,
Aśvatthāman brooded
For long over this,
Breathing long sighs
Of grief
And inconsolable sorrow.

47 Then, suddenly,
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
Flung aside his bow,
Leapt out of chariot,
And ran out
Of the battlefield,
Shouting, "Shame! Shame!
Lies! All lies!"

48 In the course
Of his flight
He saw the defectless
Compiler of the Vedas,
Sarasvatī's storehouse,
The knower of the Vedas –
Vyāsa himself.

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49 O continuer of the Kaurava clan!
Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman,
His voice choking with grief,
Said to him
In deep distress:

50 "Bho! Bho!
No! No!
Is this all māyā?
Who wishes this for me?
I don't understand.
Why did my missile fail?
What was my mistake?

51 Why the malfunction?
Something's gone wrong
In the three worlds,
Or how can these two
Be still living?
Kāla conquers all –
Who can change Kāla?

52 Anti-gods and Gandharvas
Pisacas and Rākṣasas
Snakes
Yakṣas
Insects
Humans –

53 None of them
Had the power
To baffle my missile.
Yet this radiant missile
Collapsed
After annihilating
A single *akṣauhiṇī* of soldiers!

54 I hurled this missile
Of supreme ferocity
To kill them all.
Why did it fail to kill
Keśava-Krishna and Arjuna?
Isn't their dharma
The dharma of mortals?

55 *Bhagavan*! Revered one!
O mahā-muni!
Give me the answer
To all this.
I must know
The truth."

56 Vyāsa replied:
"Your puzzlement
Is natural.
Your questions
Are profound.
They are mahā-important.
I will explain everything.
Listen to me carefully.

57 Nārāyaṇa
Is the most ancient
Of ancients –
Ādi-deva
The Primal Divinity –
Jagannātha
The Lord of the Worlds –
Loka-Kartā Svayam-prabhu
The Self-Born World-Creator –
Without beginning or end –
Acyuta
The Undeteriorating One

58 The sacred scriptures
Of revelation
Called *śrutis*
And the ascetic munis
Try to divine
His nature.
The minds
Of the creatures of the world
Cannot fathom
The mystery
Of the Lord of the world.

59 This World-Creator
For a special mission
Took birth on earth
As the son of Dharma.
This sun-and-fire-radiant
Nārāyaṇa, with arms upraised
In the Himālayan hills,
Performed a mahā-tapasyā
Over a long period.

60 Surviving
For sixty-six thousand years
On air alone,
This lotus-eyed one
Mortified his body
With intense concentration.

61 Again,
For twice that long,
With profound tapasyā
He filled the space
Between earth and sky
With the radiance
Of his creative penance.

62 *Tāta*! Dear one!
With the strength
Of that tapasyā
He became one with Brahmā
The God of the worlds
The Womb of the cosmos
The Lord of the universe

63 Who cannot
Be overpowered,
Who is extolled
By the gods,
Who is smaller
Than the smallest,
And larger
Than the largest,

64 Who is Rudra-Śiva
Īśāna-Śiva the Radiant Sun
Vṛṣabha the Bounteons One
Hara-Śiva the Ill-Remover
Śambhu-Śiva the Beneficent
Kapardin-Śiva the Matted-Haired
The Granter
Of consciousness
And discrimination –
And the yoni
Of all that is moving
And unmoving –

65 Who cannot
be stopped
Who is awesome
to behold
Who is fierce
with the wicked
Who is
a mahātmā
Who removes
all sorrows
Who is generous
to the pious
Who wields
a divine bow
And a pair
of quivers
Whose coat-of-mail
is golden
Whose valour
is endless.

66 Who wields
the *pināka*-trident
Who brandishes
the thunderbolt
the flaming *śūla*-spear
the *paraśva*-hatchet
the mace
the long sword
Who is
*śubhra*-handsome
Who is
matted-haired
Who is
armed with a club
Whose head crest
is the moon
Who is dressed
in tiger-skin
Who carries
the rod of punishment.

67 Who wears
beautiful armlets
Whose sacred thread
are the snakes
That coil
round his neck
Who is radiant
with the hosts
Of ghosts
who accompany him
Who is
the only one
The One
without a second
Who is
tapasyā's storehouse
Who receives
the reverence
Of elders
couched in sweet speech

68

Who is
Water
The quarters
Sky
Earth
Sun
Moon
Wind
Fire
The Measure of the universe
Cosmic Time . . .
Those who deny
Brahman
Those who defy
Brahman
Those who revile
the Source of amṛta
the nectar of immortality
Never obtain
his darshan

69

Only the Brahma-knowers
who live a life
of piety
Whose minds
are free
of corroding grief
Whose ill deeds
are cancelled
can get his darshan
Whose glory
is manifested
in this universe
Who deserves
all our dharma
and our praise
Whose darshan expands
body and mind
and speech and wisdom.
Blissful was the union with him
Experienced by Vāsudeva-Nārāyaṇa.

70 Receiving the darshan
Of the Supreme Splendour
The cause
of the creation
of the cosmos
Wearing
round his neck
an *akṣa*-bead garland
Nārāyaṇa extolled
the glory
of the Divinity.

71 The Bestower
of boons
on his *bhaktas*
The Lord who sports
with lovely-
limbed Pārvatī
The Mahātmā surrounded
by hosts of ghosts
and *gaṇa*-demi-gods

72 The Aja
Unborn
Īśāna
the Radiant Sun
Avyakta
the Unmanifested One
Kāraṇa-ātmāna
the Core Cause
Acyuta
the Undecaying One.
Falling
On his knees
And touching his head
On the ground
In respectful *añjali*,

73 Lotus-eyed Nārāyaṇa
Revered Virūpākṣa-Rudra
The three-eyed Śiva
The slayer of Andhaka
With this bhakti-chant:

74 'Adorable One!
Ādi-deva!
First of all the gods!
The creators of the world
Who protect the world,
Who have protected
    the world
Since the creation
    of the world –
These creators of the world
Were created by you.

75 Gods and anti-gods
Nāgas and Rākṣasas
Piśācas and humans
Gandharvas and Yakṣas
And all other creatures
Are created by you.
The glories of Indra, Yama,
Varuṇa, Kubera, Pitṛs, Tvaṣṭṛ
Are all your creation.

76 Form
Light
Sound
Sky
Wind
Touch
Taste
Water
Scent
Earth
Kāla
Brahmā
Brahma-Vedas
Brahmins
Whatever
    moves
Whatever
    does not move
In this world
Is your creation.

[VII:201:77-78]

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77

Like
Vapours
From the ocean
Become rain-drops
And rain-drops
Return
To become
One
With the ocean –
So all
Arises
From you
And all
At the end
Becomes one
With you –
The wise
Who know this
Become one
With you.

78

Two
Golden
Celestial
Immortal
Birds
Sit
On
A pippala tree –
One watches
The other eats
One discriminates
The other does
The branches
Of the pippala
Are four:
The Vedas –
The nourishers
Of the pippala
Are seven:
Chyle

Blood
Flesh
Fat
Bone
Marrow
Semen –
And ten others:
The five
Gross senses
And the five
Finer senses:
Eye/sight
Ear/hearing
Nose/smell
Tongue/taste
Skin/touch . . .
All are
    your creation
Yet you are
    different and apart.

79 Past
Present
Future
Invincible
Unassailable
Irresistible
Are your creation
As well as
All the worlds
Of the cosmos.
I am
    your *bhakta*
I sing
    your bhajans
O make me
    your own!
O save me
    from suffering!
Let no ill thoughts
    enter me!

80

You are
the Ātman
of ātmans
The ineffable
Ātman
of all –
Who knows this
attains
the radiant Brahman.
I praise you
to know
your nature.
O ineffable
incomparable
Divinity!
Grant my desire!
Let not your māyā
stand in the way!
Grant your worshipper
This boon so hard to attain.' "

81

"Son of Droṇa!"
continued Vyāsa,
"Nīla-Kaṇṭha Śiva,
The blue-throated Divinity,
The Divinity with
The ineffable ātman,
The trident-wielding Divinity,
The Divinity
Extolled by ṛṣis,
Granted boon-deserving
Nārāyaṇa the desired boons.

82

Bhagavān Śiva said:
'Nārāyaṇa!
Through my grace
The strength of your ātman
Will surpass
Any being born in the wombs
Of humans
Gods
And Gandharvas.

83 Gods
Anti-gods
Mahā-serpents
Piśācas
Gandharvas
Yakṣas
Rākṣasas
Will fail
Against you.

84 *Suparṇa* birds of prey
Nāgas
No creature
Born in the universe
Not even gods
Will defeat you in battle.

85 No weapons
Thunderbolt
Fire or wind
Wet or dry
Moving or unmoving

86 Nothing
can harm you
Nothing
can injure you
Because
of my grace
In battle
your strength
Will exceed
even mine.'

87 This is how
Śauri-Krishna
Obtained boons
In the distant past
From Śiva.
And Nārāyaṇa
As Krishna moves
In the world today
Spellbinding all
With his māyā.

88 From the tapasyā
Of Nārāyaṇa
Came into being
The mahā-muni
Called Nara.
Know him
To be Arjuna.
He is the equal
Of Nārāyaṇa.

89 These two ṛṣis
Nara-Nārāyaṇa
Are older
Than the oldest gods.
They take birth
Yuga after yuga
For the good of the world.

90 O mahā-minded one!
You too with noble karma
And tapasyā propitiated
Puissant and wrathful Rudra-Śiva,

91 And experiencing the world
As an embodiment of Śiva,
You emaciated and enfeebled
Your body with the practice
Of excessively mortifying rituals.

92 O respectworthy one!
You created
A perfect image
Of the Paragon-Person
The Mahā-puruṣa Śiva
Whom you adored
With *japa*
And *homa*
And gift-offerings.

93 O learned one!
This pūjā
In a previous birth
Gratified Śiva,
And he gave you
Heart-delighting boons.

94 In birth
Karma
Tapasyā
Yoga
Both you
And they
Are equally excellent.
In yuga after yuga
The god whose symbol
In the liṅga
Was revered
By them and by you.

95 Whoever worships
Lord Śiva of all forms
In his liṅga-form
Attains the eternal
Ātma-yoga
    Oneness-with-the-ātman
And śāstra-yoga
    Profundity-of-wisdom.

96 Gods
Siddhas
And the finest ṛṣis
Worship
Straight-as-a-tree-trunk-
During-meditation
Sthāṇu-Śiva
For he is the
All-Creator
And the Granter of prayers
In this world.

97 Keśava-Krishna
Is the *bhakta*
Of Rudra-Śiva
And one with Śiva,
Which is why
The object
Of yajña-worship
Must always be
The Eternal Krishna.

98 Whoever worships
The śiva-liṅga
Of the Lord-Prabhu
Knowing it to be
The source of all life
Becomes the recipient
Of the decepest love
Of Śiva, the Deity
With the bull-symbol flag."

99 Listening to these words
(continued Sañjaya),
The mahā-chariot-hero
Son of Droṇa, Aśvatthāman,
Namaskāra-ed Rudra-Śiva
And accepted the glory
Of Keśava-Krishna.

100 He horripilated. Humbly
He revered Mahā-ṛṣi Vyāsa.
Looking at his army,
He ordered its retreat.

101 O lord of the world!
Both the Pāṇḍavas
And the Kauravas
Withdrew from battle,
The Kauravas humiliated
By the death of Droṇa.

102 O rājā!
After five days
Of fierce battle,
Drona who had mastered
The deepest wisdom
Of the Vedas
And spread carnage
Among his foes
Attained the realm of Brahmā.

## SECTION TWO HUNDRED TWO

1 “After that remarkable
Chariot-hero Droṇa
Was killed by Dhṛṣṭadyumna,
The son of Pṛṣata,”
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
“What did my soldiers
And the Pāṇḍavas do?”

2 With Droṇa killed by Dhṛṣṭadyumna
And the Kaurava ranks fleeing
(replied Sañjaya),
Kuntī’s son Dhanañjaya-Arjuna

3 Saw an incredible omen
Suggesting his victory.
O bull-brave Bharata!
He asked Vyāsa
Who had come there:

4 “While I was killing
My foes on the field
With radiant arrows,
I saw a male figure
Dazzling like fire
In front of me.

5 O mahā-muni!
Wherever he turned
The flaming trident
In his hand,
My enemies were routed.

6 They thought I routed them,
But it was he.
I merely gave chase
To the ones who were fleeing.

7 *Bhagavan!*
Adorable one!
Who was that Puruṣottama,
That all-excelling man?
He was carrying a trident.
He dazzled like the sun.

8 His feet
never touched the ground.
His hand
never hurled the trident.
From that one trident
streamed hundreds
of more tridents."

9 "The first of the Prajāpatis,"
Replied Vyāsa,
"The Primal Puruṣa-Lord
The Lord of all the worlds
The embodied Lord
Of earth and sky
And heaven,

10 The boon-bestowing
Īśāna-Śiva
Śaṅkara-Śiva –
O Pārtha-Arjuna!
The favour-granting
Lord of the worlds –
Go to him
And seek his blessings,
For you have seen him.

11 Mahā-deva
Mahā-ātman
Īśāna
The glorious
Matted-haired
Divinity!
Three-eyed
Mahā-armed
Rudra-fierce
Tuft-haired
Deerskin-clad . . .

12 Mahādeva-Śiva
the surpassing Divinity
Hara-Śiva
the Remover of sorrows
Sthāṇu-Śiva
the Unshakably Stable
Varadaṁ Bhuvaneśvaram
the Favour-granting World-Lord
The invincible
Lord of the world
The affection-abounding
Lord of the world

13 The yoni of the world
The seed of the world
The victorious one
The goal of the world
The ātman of the world
The creator of the world
The image of the world
The illustrious one!

14 Viśveśvara Lord of the universe
Viśva-nara the Primal Male
Karmaṇāmīśvara Lord of karma
Prabhu Lord
Śambhu Śiva
Svayambhu Self-Born
Bhūteśa Lord of creatures
Lord of was and is and will be!

15 Yoga
Yogeśvara Lord-of-yoga
Sarva-lokeśvareśvara
Lord of the lords of the world
Sarva-śreṣṭha All-Excelling
Jagat-śreṣṭha World-Excelling
Parameṣṭhin the Supreme Excellence!

16 Of the three worlds
the sole sustainer
Of the three world the sole Refuge
Pure-ātmaned marvellous Being
Head adorned with the moon-crown!

17 Eternal World-Supporting
Divinity
Lord of the lords
of speech
Unoverpowerable Jagannātha
Lord of the world
Unaffected by
birth and death and decay.

18 Jñānātmān Ātman-of-knowledge
Jñānagamya Unknowable-by-knowledge
Jñānasreṣṭha Supreme knowledge
Though difficult to know
He is known to his *bhaktas*
By the gifts of his grace.

19 His attendants include:
A variety of gods
Dwarfs
Matted-locks and bald-heads
Short-necks
Huge-stomachs

20 Mahā-bodies
Maha-persevering
Mahā-ears . . .
O Pārtha-Arjuna!
Crooked-faced too
Twisted-legged
Weird-dressed . . .

21 Mahādeva-Śiva
Maheśvara-Śiva
Receives pūjā from them too.
*Tāta*! Dear one!
What you see
Striding ahead of you
Is radiant gracious Śiva.

22 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
In this gory horripilating war,
With such brilliant bowmen
As Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman
And Karṇa and Kṛpa
As protectors

23 Of the Kaurava armies –
Who, O Pārtha-Arjuna,
Except the multi-formed
Mahā-bowman Deity
Maheśvara-Śiva
Could even think of
Routing the enemy forces?

24 Who will dare challenge
The warrior in front of whom
Walks Śiva himself?
There is no one
In the three worlds
Who can face Śiva.

25 When Śiva is angry
The smell that emanates
From his body
Drugs his enemies;
They tremble
And fall half-dead
On the battlefield.

26 The gods in heaven
Namaskāra him
In homage.
And mortals in this world
Who pay homage to him
Attain heaven.

27 All mortals who
In whatever way
Are *bhaktas* of boon-
Granting Rudra-Śiva
And adore the Lord-of-all –

28 They find
Happiness
In this world
And supreme felicity
In the next.
Kuntī's son!
Make it so that
You always revere
The Serene Śiva,

29 Who is also Rudra
the Awesome One
Śitikaṇṭha
the Blue-Throated One
Kaniṣṭha
the Subtle One
Suvarcas
the Super-Radiant One
Kapardin
the Knotted-Haired One
Karālāya
the Massive-Bodied One
The granter of boons
to yellow-eyed Kubera.

30 Ally-of Yama
Invisible-matted-haired
Noble-behaving Śaṅkara-Śiva
The Desirable Deity
The Yellow-Eyed One
The Stable Puruṣa-Spirit

31 Tawny-haired one
Bald-crowned one
Saviour of the distressed
Sun-dazzling one
The Supreme Tīrtha
The God of gods

32 The Multi-Manifesting one
Sarva-Śiva
Maker-of-all
Beloved-of-all
Pleasing-vesture-dressed
Handsome-turbaned one
Rain-showering one

33 Hill-dwelling one
Supremely serene one
Bark-dressed ascetic
Golden-armleted
Royally awesome
Lord of the quarters

34 Lord of rain-
Bringing Parjanya clouds
Lord of ghosts and spirits –
We adore you!
Protector of trees
Protector of cows –
We adore you!

35 Deity whose body
Is shaded by trees
General of armies
Inspirer of minds
Deity who holds
The yajña-ladle
Who is bow-wielding
Bhārgava Paraśurāma

36 Multi-manifested
Lord of the world
Robed in *muñja*-grass
Thousand-headed
And thousand-eyed

37 Thousand-armed
Thousand-legged . . .
O son of Kuntī!
Seek the refuge
Of this boon-bestowing
Lord of the worlds

38

The consort of Umā
The three-eyed Deity
The Destroyer of
The yajña of Dakṣa
The Protector of people
The Unperplexed Deity
The Undeteriorating Lord
Of all creatures

39

The tuft-knotted one
Bull-gaited bull-navelled
Bull-flagged bull-proud
Whose flag has the symbol
Of bull-horns
Who is the Bull of bulls.

40

Bull-symbolled
Bull-generous
Bull-eyed
Bull-strong-weaponed
Whose arrow is Vṛṣa-
Viṣṇu-Krishna
Who is Vṛṣa-Viṣṇu-
Krishna incarnate
Who is the Supreme
Vṛṣa-Viṣṇu-Krishna

41

Mahā-bellied
Mahā-bodied
Tiger-skin-dressed
Bald-crowned
World-lord
Boon-bestower
Devoted
To Brahmins
And affectionate
To Brahmins

42 Trident-wielding
Boon-bestower
Lord-of-the-sword-
And-the-shield
Wielder of the Pināka-
Bow and the sword
Lord and saviour
Of the worlds

43 Bark-dressed Deity –
We seek your shelter
We seek your grace!
O Lord of gods
O loved-and-loving *sakhā*
Of the Vaiśravaṇa fire
Namaste!

44 Excellently dressed
Excellently vowed – namaste!
Bow-wielding Divinity
Bow-loving
Bow-expert

45 Bow-paragon
Bow-ācārya –
Namaste!
To the Deity
With fierce weapons –
Namaste!

46 O Multi-formed One –
Namo-astu!
O Multi-Bow-Wielder –
Namo-astu!
O Eternally Stable –
Namo-astu!
O Lord of tapasyā –
Namo-astu!

47 O Slayer of Tripura –
Namo-astu!
O Slayer of Bhaga –
Namaḥ!
Lords of forests and Lord of men –
Namaḥ!

48 Lord of the *gaṇa*-demi-gods
Lord of the Mātṛs:
Gaurī
Padmā
Śacī
Medhā
Sāvitri
Vijayā
Jayā
Devasenā
Svāhā
Śānti
Puṣṭi
Dhṛti
Tuṣṭi
Ātmadevatā
Kuladevatā
Lord of cows and yajñas –
Namaḥ!

49 Lord of the waters
Lord of the gods –
Namaḥ!
Destroyer of the teeth
of Pūṣan
Three-eyed boon-bestowing
Deity

50 Blue-throated
Yellow-complexioned
Golden-haired –
Namaḥ!
The celestial karma
Of Mahādeva-Śiva, the wise,

51 With my little intelligence
Such as I have heard,
I shall now narrate
To you.
Neither gods nor anti-gods
Nor Gandharvas nor Rākṣasas
In this world

52 Can be at peace
Even if they hide
In the deepest caves,
If Śiva is angry.
A long time ago,
When Dakṣa was collecting
Materials for a yajña,

53 Infuriated Śiva
Destroyed them all.
Ruthlessly
He shot an arrow
And roared fiercely.

54 The gods were robbed
Of joy and peace
By Maheśvara-Śiva's
Obstruction of yajñas.

55 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
The twang of his bow-string
Terrified the worlds.
The gods and anti-gods collapsed.

56 The oceans
Heaved and swelled,
The earth trembled,
The mountains cracked,
And the elephants
Of the quarters were stupefied.

57 Shrouded
In gruesome darkness
Was the light
Of the three worlds.
The radiance of the sun
And the planets
Disappeared.

58 The terrified ṛṣis
And other beings
For their own peace
And the welfare of others
Busied themselves
With varied
Propitiatory rituals.

59 Śankara-Śiva, smiling,
Attacked Pūṣan the Sun
Who was eating
The *puroḍāśa*-oblations
And crushed
All this teeth.

60 Trembling in fear
The gods fled
After bowing to him,
But he targeted them
With sharp flaming arrows

61 That scattered smoke
And lightning-like sparks,
And the frightened gods
Praṇāma-ed Maheśvara-Śiva,

62 And contemplated offering him
A large share of
The yajña-oblations.
O rājā! Afraid, the gods
Sought refuge in him.

63 His anger soothed,
Siva permitted the yajña
To proceed. The gods
Who had fled that day –
To this day they remain
Afraid of him.

64 In the distant past,
The valiant anti-gods
Had three sky-cities:
One made of iron,
Another of silver,
And a mahā-metropolis
Of pure gold.

65 The golden city
Belonged
To Kamalākṣa,
The silver
To Tārakākṣa,
The third of iron
To Vidyutmālin.

66 Using all the śakti
Of all his war-weapons,
Maghavān-Indra
Could not subdue those cities.
The troubled gods
Sought the grace
Of Rudra-Śiva.

67 Led by Vāsava-Indra,
The gods said
To mahā-ātmaned Śiva:
'As a result of the boons
Given to them by Brahmā,
The dwellers
Of the three cities,

68 Proud of their boons,
Are oppressing
The three worlds.
Lord of the god of gods!
None but you
Has the śakti

69 To destroy the Daityas.
O Mahādeva-Śiva!
Kill these molesters
Of the gods.
O Rudra-Śiva!
If you do so,
All beasts immolated
In all the rituals
Will be yours.

70 O Bhuvaneśvara!
Lord of the universe!
Exterminate the anti-gods!'
Supplicated by the gods
And wishing their welfare
Śiva said, 'So be it.'

71 Gandhamādana and Vindhya Mountains
Hara-Śiva made
His chariot's flag-poles.
Śaṅkara-Śiva made the oceaned-
And-forested earth his chariot's

72 Axle, fastened securely
With the Indra-of-snakes Śeṣa.
Trilocana-Three-eyed Pinākа-wielding Śiva
Made the sun and the moon
His wheels;

73 His followers
Elapatra's son
And Puṣpadanta
The linch-pin;
Tryambaka-Three-eyed
Three-mothered
Ambe-ambike-'mbālike
Śiva
Made the mountains
Of the Malaya
His yoke,
And the snake-prince
Takṣaka
His chariot-rope.

74 Maheśvara-Śiva
Made the four Vedas
The four horses
Of his chariot.
Illustrious Śarva-Śiva
Made the Vedāṅgas
The bridle and harness.

75 The beings surrounding him
Became the protectors
Of the horses of
The Lord of the three worlds,
The Gāyatrī and Sāvitrī
Became the reins
For Maheśvara-Śiva

76 The syllable Oṁkāra
    the whip
Brahmā the charioteer
The Mandara mountain
    the Gāṇḍīva bow
Vāsuki the bow-string

77 Viṣṇu
    the excellent arrows
Agni
    the arrow-head
Vāyu
    the feathers
Vaivasvata-Yama
    the tail

78 Lightning
    the sharp edge
Mount Meru
    his war-flag . . .
Riding in that chariot
    all-gods-empowered Śiva

79 Sthāṇu-Śiva advanced
    to destroy Tripura –
The anti-god annihilator!
Incomparably puissant
Śrīmān Śiva
The glorious God!

80 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
Adored by the gods
And tapasyā-rich ṛṣis,
The Lord Maheśvara-Śiva,
Stationed in that divine
Indescribable chariot,

81 Stood in it
Firm and unmoving
For a thousand years.
When the three cities
Materialised in mid-space,

82 He disintegrated them
With three triple-knotted
Shafts with sharp heads.
The Dānavas dared not look

83 At the arrow that was charged
With the blaze of doomsday Kāla
And the power of Viṣṇu and Soma.
When the three cities were burning
Devi Durgā came to see the sight

84 Carrying a baby
With five tufts of hair.
She asked the gods:
'Do you recognise
This baby?'

85 Displeased by her question,
Śakra-Indra flared up
And was about to hurl
His thunderbolt
When Lord Śiva paralysed
The thunderbolt-wielding arm
Of enraged Indra.

86 The radiant Bhagavān
Lord of the three worlds
Sarva-lokeśvara
Smiled as he did so.
With his hosts of gods,
Śakra-Indra,
With his pralysed arm
Proceeded

87 To the Undeteriorating
Lord Deity Brahmā.
All the gods
With bowed heads
Praṇāma-ed Brahmā,
Offered *añjali* and said:

88 'Who is this wonderful
Baby in Pārvatī's lap,
A slip of a child
Whom we could not recognise?

89 What kind of līlā
Is this – that baby
Worsted all of us
With Puraṁdara-Indra
At our head! We want you
To tell us all about him.'

90 Best-of-Brahma-knowers Brahmā
Heard this, reflected, and realised
The infinitely powerful baby
Could only be Bhagavān Śambhu-Śiva.

91 Bhagavān Brahmā
Said to Śakra-Indra
The chief of the gods
And to the accompanying gods:
'He is Bhagavān Hara-Śiva,
Lord of all that moves
And does not move
In this world.

92 There is no one superior
To the Mahā-Divinity
Maheśvara-Śiva.
The infinitely powerful baby
Whom you saw
With Umā-Pārvatī

93 Is Śarva-Śiva appearing
In baby-form in order
To please Umā-Pārvatī.
Come with me.
Let us together
Seek refuge in him.

94 He is Sarva-lokeśvara
The Lord of all the worlds
*Prabhu* Lord God
Bhagavān who possesses
The six *bhaga*-excellences
dignity
majesty
distinction
excellence
beauty
prosperity
Bhuvaneśvara
The Lord of the earth –
And all the gods today

95 With all the Prajāpatis
Failed to recognise him
As the dazzling baby!'
Brahmā approached
Maheśvara-Śiva
In his baby-form

96 And realised he was
In the presence
Of the All-Excelling One;
So Pitāmahā Brahmā
Sang his praise:
'You are the yajña
You are the refuge
of the world
You are the Ultimate Goal
of the world

97 You are Bhava
    Being
    And Becoming
O Mahādeva
Supreme Goal
Supreme Way to the Goal
You pervade the world's
Moving and unmoving life

98 O Lord
    of the past
    of the present
    of the future
O Lokanātha
    Lord of the worlds
O Jagatpate
    Lord of the universe
Here is Śakra-Indra
    afflicted by your wrath
Grant him your grace!' "

99 Vyāsa continued:
"Pleased
By the words
Of Padma-yoni
Lotus-born Brahmā,
Maheśvara-Śiva
Was moved enough
To grant his grace –
And laughed uproariously.

100 The gods gratified
Rudra-Śiva
And Umā-Pārvatī.
The arm
Of thunderbolt-
Wielding Indra
Was restored
To its normal shape

101

The Deity
Whose flag
Has the bull symbol,
Who destroyed
The yajña of Dakṣa,
With his consort
Umā-Pārvatī –
Bhagavān Śiva
Was gratified
And granted
His grace
To the gods.

102

Rudra!
Śiva!
Agni!
All!
Knower-of-all!
Indra!
Vāyu!
The Aśvins!
Lightning!

103

Bhava
  Being
  and
  Becoming!
Parjanya
  the rain-cloud!
Sanātana-Eternal
  Mahādeva!
Candramā the Moon!
Īśana the Sun!
Sūrya and Varuṇa!

104 Kāla
Śiva!
Black
Doom!
Antaka
Siva!
The End
of Time!
Death!
Yama!
Night!
Day!
Month!
Fortnight!
Season!
Morning twilight
Saṁdhyā!
Evening twilight
Saṁdhyā!
The entire year!

105 Dhātā
and Vidhātā!
Creator
and Disposer!
Viśvātmā
the World-Ātman!
Visva-karma-kṛt
World-Deed-Doer!
Bodiless
and formless
Yet bodied
and formed
In a multitude
of gods.

106 Praised
by all the gods!
One –
yet many –
Hundreds and thousands
and hundreds of thousands!

107 Brahmins
Who are wise
In the Vedas
Know
He has two forms:
*Ghora*-dreadful
*Śiva*-peaceful.
These two divide
Into many others.

108 Dreadful
Are these:
Agni
Viṣṇu
Bhāskara-Sun
The peaceful
And tranquil
Are these:
Water
Planets
Condramā-Moon

109 Deva
Maheśvara
Śiva
Is
Whatever is supreme
Whatever is mysterious
In the Vedas
The Vedāṅgas
The Upaniṣads
The Purāṇas
The Adhyātmā texts
of the Supreme Ātman.

110 Such is the glory
Of the Birthless one
Bhagavān Mahādeva-Śiva.
It is not possible
For me to narrate
All the guṇas
Of Bhagavān
Śiva

111 Even if I had
A thousand years,
O Pāṇḍu's son Arjuna,
In which to do so.
Those who fall
Under the influence
Of inauspicious planets,
Those who drown
In the depths
Of their misdeeds –

112 If they seek his shelter,
He grants them salvation.
Long life and health,
Fame and wealth,
Fulfilment of kāma –

113 Are granted by him
To humans, and taken away
If his wrath is roused.
The glory of the gods
And Indra is really his.

114 In right and wrong
In good and evil
Auspicious and inauspicious
It is he
Who is present –
Such is the glory of
Kāmānāmīśvara
The God who grants
All desires.

115 Because he is
The Lord of beings
He is called
Maheśvara
The Mahā-Divinity.
Multi-formed,
He pervades the universe.

116 The mouth of this god<br>
Is in the ocean.<br>
As the Vaḍavā sea-fire<br>
He drinks water-libations.

117 This god<br>
Is a dweller<br>
Forever<br>
In cremation grounds.<br>
This Lord<br>
Is worshipped<br>
By humans<br>
In places<br>
Where the brave<br>
And the heroic<br>
Are present.

118 Many are<br>
The radiant forms,<br>
Many are<br>
The ruthless forms<br>
Of this Divinity.<br>
The world offers<br>
Them pūjā,<br>
And humans<br>
Sing their glories.

119 Many<br>
Are the names<br>
Given to this god<br>
Describing<br>
His glory<br>
His greatness<br>
His feats.

120 Honoured as the Ananta-rudra<br>
The Infinite Śiva<br>
His glory is sung<br>
In the Yajur-Veda<br>
In the Śata-rudriya which hymns<br>
The Mahā-Ātmaned Hundred-Formed Śiva.

121 Lord of the kāma
Of gods and humans!
All-pervading Prabhu-Lord!
The Glorious One!
The Everywhere One!

122 He
Is the eldest
The most ancient,
Say the Brahmins
And the munis.
He is the first
Of the gods.
He is the god
From whose mouth
Was born fire.

123 Because
He is the protector
Of animals –
Because
He loves the company
Of animals –
Because he is
The Lord of animals,
He is called
Paśupati.

124 Firm
In brahmacarya
Complete self-control
Is his liṅga
His phallus
Always erect.
Because he is
The mahā-ascetic,
He is called
Maheśvara
The Mahā-Divinity.

Transcreated by P. Lal

125 Ṛṣis
Gods
Gandharvas
Apsarās
Worship
The liṅga
Which is
Always
Erect.

126 When
Pūjā
Is offered
To
The liṅga
Maheśvara-Śiva
Is pleased
Saṅkara-Śiva
Is delighted
Overjoyed
Ecstatic.

127 Many
Are the forms
Of Bahurūpa
The Many-formed
Moving
And unmoving
In the past
The present
And the future.

128 He has eyes
On all sides
But one eye
Blazes forth
In wrath.
Because he
Is everywhere
In all the worlds,
He is Sarva
The All.

129 Because he
Is Dhumrarūpa
Dark-coiling –
Smoke-complexioned,
He is called
Dhūrjaṭi
Dark-matted-haired.
He is Viśva-rūpa World-Formed
Because the Viśva-deva
World-gods are in him.

130 Three devīs
Sky
Water
Earth
Praise
Bhuvaneśvara-Śiva
So he is Tryambaka
The Three-Mothered One.

131 Because he wishes
The welfare of all
And helps in the fulfilment
Of all karma
Of all human beings
He is Śiva
The Auspicious One.

132 He has a thousand eyes
He has ten thousand eyes.
Because he is the Mahā-
Protector of the worlds,
He is called Mahādeva.

133 The Divine Immensity
In the ancient past –
The Source of all prāṇa –
The evolving Energiser –
The Erect Liṅga Symbol –
He is Sthāṇu
The Stable One.

134 The rays of the Sun
And the Moon
That shoot through space
Are seen as the locks
Of three-eyed Śiva,
Vyoma-keśa
The Sky-Haired One.

135 Bhūta-past
Bhavya-present
Bhaviṣya-future –
He is in all three
So he is called
Bhūta-bhavya-bhavod-bhava.

136 Kapi means Viṣṇu
the Supreme
Vṛṣa means Virtue
personified
So the God of gods Śiva
is Vṛṣākapi.

137 He is Hara the Stealer
Because he tames
Brahmā
Indra
Varuṇa
Yama
And Dhanada-Kubera the Wealth-Giver
And appropriates their glory.

138 He is Tryakṣa
The Three-Eyed One
Because Maheśvara-Śiva
By the power of his will
Closed his two eyes
And created a third in his forehead.

139 He is the regular
And irregular
In all life-forms.
He is the Prāṇa
And Apāṇa life-breaths
In all bodies.

140 Whoever offers pūjā
To the linga of
Mahā-ātmaned Śiva
Attains mahā-prosperity.

141 The half of his body
Below the thighs
Is fire; the top half
Tranquil and auspicious.
Some say: Agni below,
Soma-moon above.

142 His Śiva-half is radiant
And calm, inspiring gods.
His fierce half is Agni,
Stimulating humans.

143 With his Śiva-serene form
He practises brahmacarya.
With his fierce form
He annihilates the worlds.

144 Fierce and sharp and valiant
Consumer of flesh and blood
And marrow, he is Rudra
The Horrific One.

145 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
The figure you saw slaying
Your enemies is Pināka-bow-
Wielding Mahādeva-Śiva.

146 O defectless one! When you vowed
To kill the Sindhu-rājā
Jayadratha, Krishna showed you,
In a dream, atop a tall peak,

147 This Divinity, Bhagavān Śiva,
Striding now ahead of you.
He gave you the weapons
To destroy the Dānavas.

148 O Pārtha-Arjuna!
I have explained to you
The Śatarudriya chant
In praise
Of the God-of-gods –
An excellent life-nourishing
Holy song of the the Vedas.

149 It fulfils all desires,
Achieves all aims.
It is holy
It wipes out imperfections.
Absolves crimes
Removes sorrows and fears.

150 Whoever listens
To this sacred chant
In four parts
Conquers his enemies
And receives
The refuge
Of the realm of Rudra-Śiva.

151 Whoever listens
To this victory-bringing tale
Of mahā-ātmaned Śiva,
Whoever faithfully studies
The Śatarudriya chant,

152 Whoever is a *bhakta*
Of the Divinity
Viśveśvara-Śiva
Obtains all he desires
Through the grace of
Three-Eyed Tryambaka-Śiva.

153 Kuntī's son Arjuna!
Go! And fight!
You cannot lose.
You have Janārdana-Krishna
As counsellor and guardian."

154 Saying this to Arjuna
(continued Sañjaya)
O best of the Bharatas,
Parāśara's son Vyāsa left.

155 After fighting valiantly
For five days, O rājā,
The mahā-powerful
Brahmin Droṇa died
And went to the realm
Of Brahmā.

156 The good
That accrues
From a study
Of the Vedas
Is also the good
That comes
From this parva
Which narrates
The feats
Of brave Kṣatriyas.

157 Who reads it or hears it
Is freed from the results
Of mahā-misdeeds and
The most heinous karma.

158 The fruits of a yajña
are obtained by Brahmins
who read it or hear it
And victory in war
is obtained by Kṣatriyas
who read it or hear it
And sons and grandsons
and desirable possessions
of various kinds
Are obtained by those
of other castes
who read it or hear it.

*This internationally accepted system of Roman transliteration of the Devanāgari alphabet is followed in this transcreation.*

## VOWELS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Guttural* | अ | आ | |
| | a | ā | |
| *Palatal* | इ | ई | |
| | i | ī | |
| *Labial* | उ | ऊ | |
| | u | ū | |
| *Dental* | ऋ | | |
| | ṛ | | |
| *Guttural-Palatal* | | ए | ऐ |
| | e | ei | |
| *Guttural-Labial* | | ओ | औ |
| | o | aù | |

## CONSONANTS

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Guttural* | क | ख | ग | घ | ङ | ह | : |
| | k | kh | g | gh | ṅ | h | ḥ |
| *Palatal* | च | छ | ज | झ | ञ | य | श |
| | c | ch | j | jh | ñ | y | ś |
| *Lingual* | ट | ठ | ड | ढ | ण | र | ष |
| | ṭ | ṭh | ḍ | ḍh | ṇ | r | ṣ |
| *Dental* | त | थ | द | ध | न | ल | स |
| | t | th | d | dh | n | l | s |
| *Labial* | प | फ | ब | भ | म | व | |
| | p | ph | b | bh | m | v | |

Anusvāra = ṁ

# CONTENTS

## *Droṇaparva*

### The Chronicle of War : Book Two



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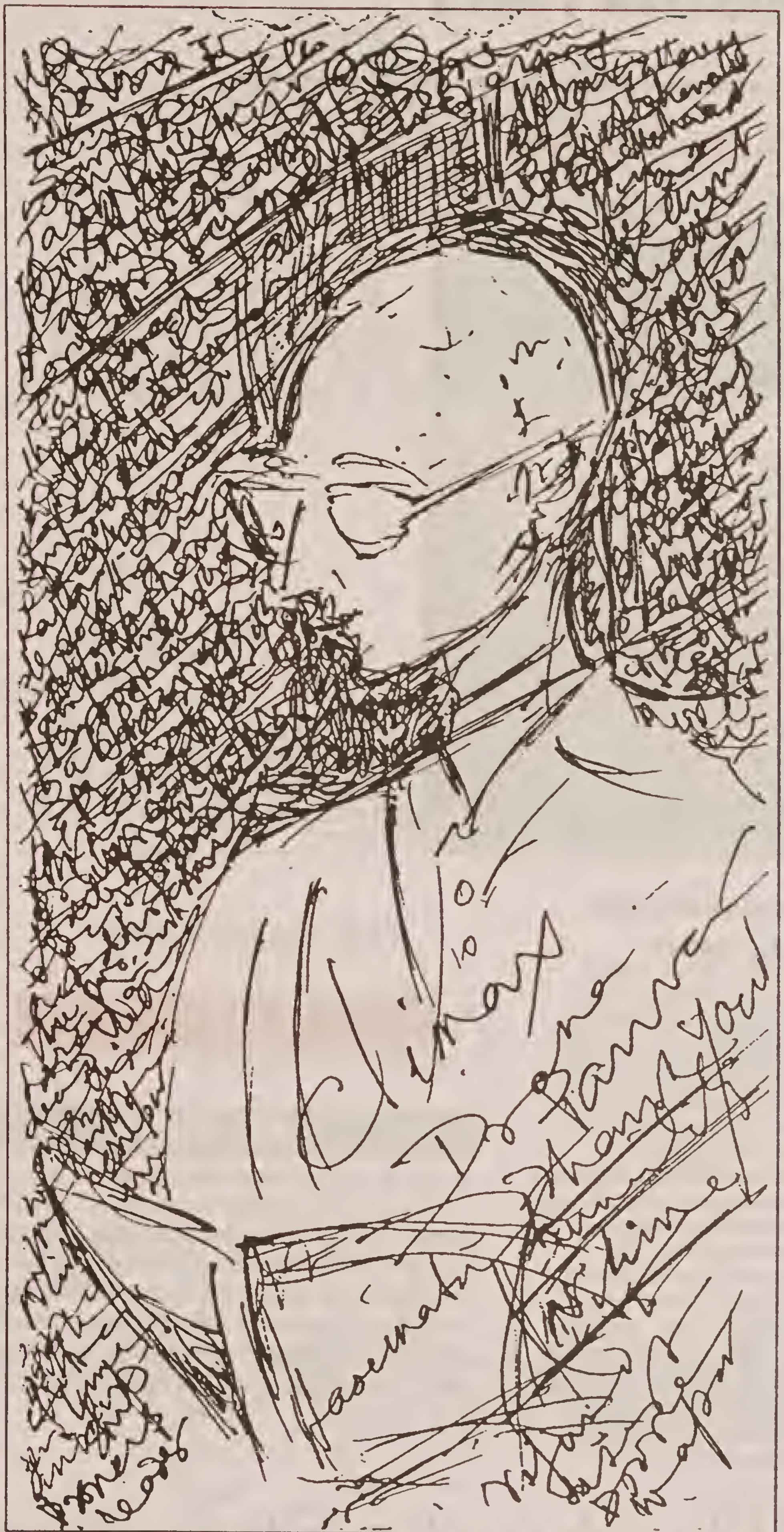
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P. Lāl reading the 334th weekly Sunday session of his English transcreation of Vyāsa's Mahābhārata on 2 July 2006 at G. D. Birla Sabhagar, Kolkata.

[*Sketch by Nilima Sen-Gangopadhyay*]

# HINDUSTAN TIMES

## Kolkata Calendar



One of Sukanta Das' works on display at Masters Collection Art Gallery

**READING SESSION**

**GD Birla Sabhagar**
Professor P Lal reads Sanjaya's report to Raja Dhritirashtra recalling on Kurukshetra, his playing childhood days with his sakta Satyaki, Krishna advising Yudhisthira on the five kinds of lies permissible in Dharma and Drona relinquishing his will to live when informed deviously of his son Asvatthaman's death in the battle, in the 31st weekly Sunday session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of Vyasa's complete *Mahabharata*, presented by Sanskriti Sagar on July 8 at 11 am.

# THE TELEGRAPH

**READING**

■ **July 8 at G.D. Birla Sabhagar; 11 am:** Professor P. Lal reads Sanjaya's report of Duryodhana recalling his childhood pranks with Satyaki, Krishna advising Yudhisthira on the five lies permissible in dharma, and Drona relinquishing his will to live when informed of Asvatthaman's death, in the 381st weekly session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of Vyasa's *Mahabharata*.

# The Sunday Statesman

**ENGAGEMENTS**

- **Prof P Lal** reads Krishna's advice to Yudhisthira on Kuruksetra from Vyasa's Mahabharata at G. D. Birla Sabhagar; 11-00

The Mahābhārata

The Mahābhārata

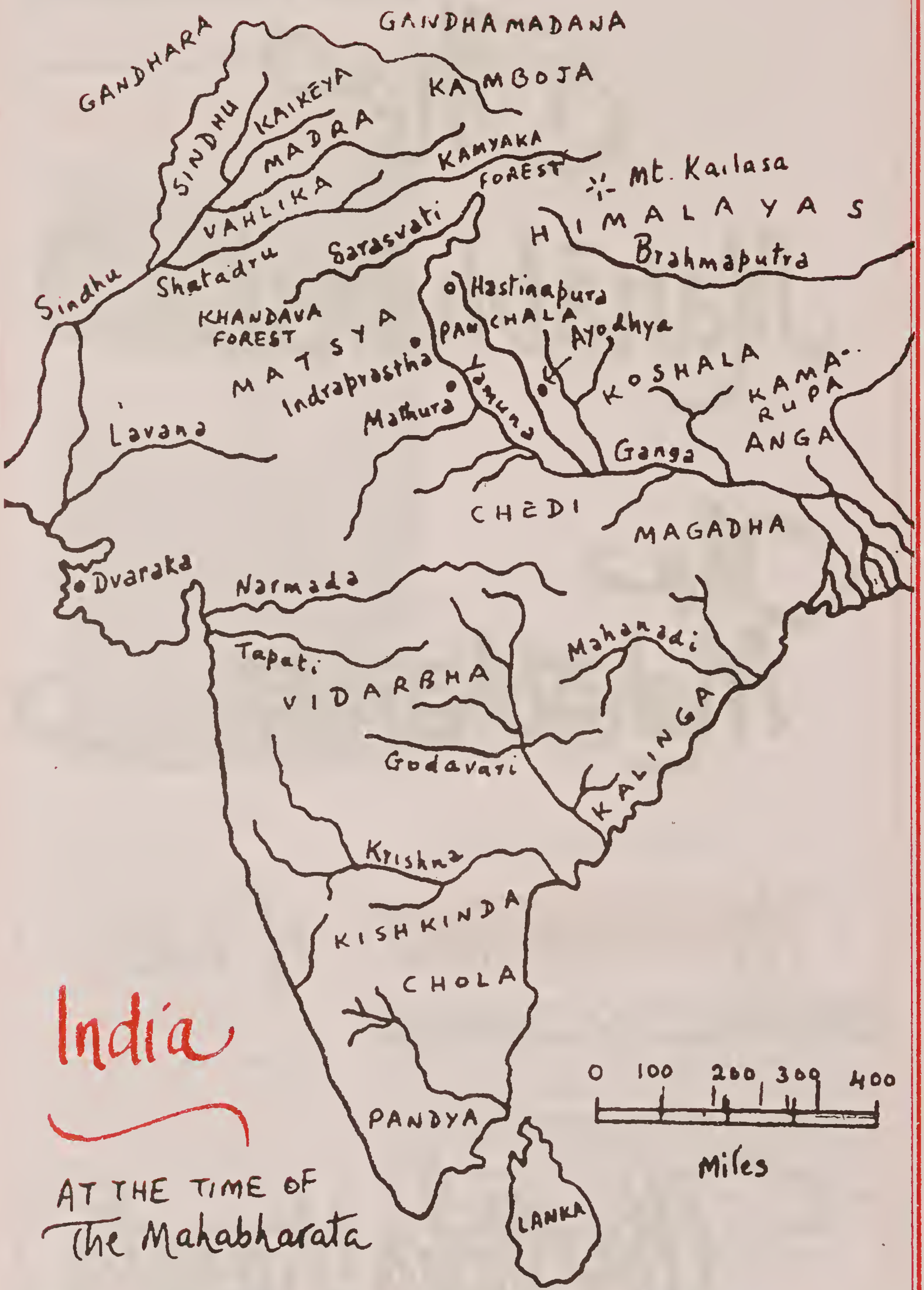
The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

*TRANSCREATED BY P. LAL*

The Mahābhārata

*OF VYASA*

The evolution of wrap-around title-flaps of P. Lāl's monthly Mahābhārata fascicules of the Sabhā Parva that appeared from WRITERS WORKSHOP in 1969-1970 as hardbound volumes 27-37.

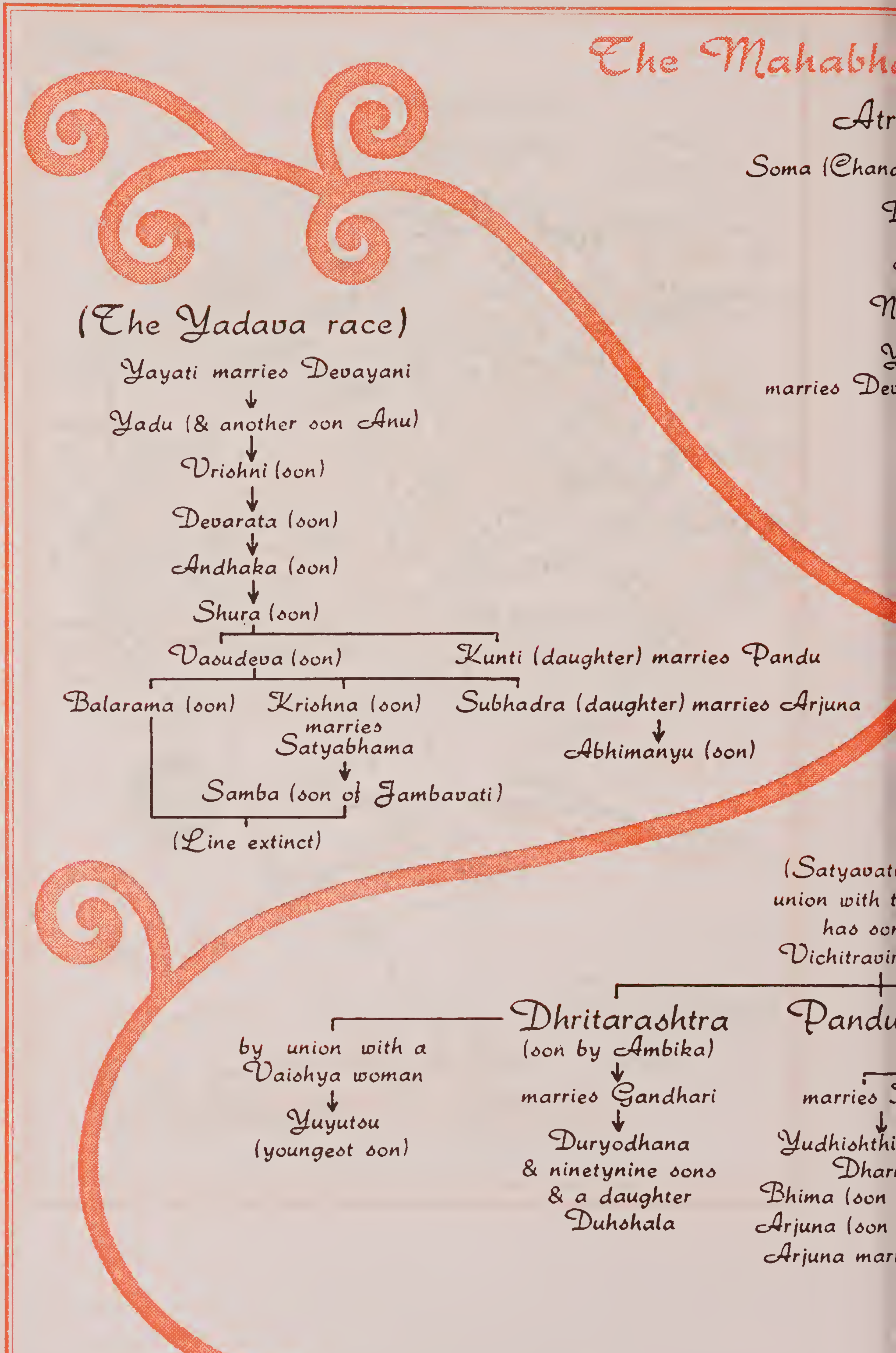



Sketch by P. Lal




Ārya-varta at the time of the Mahābhārata

Sketch by P. Lal based on *The Historical Atlas of South Asia* [University of Minnesota]




Sketch by Srimati Lal

## Family Tree

:ishi

u) the Moon

)

n)

)

Sharmishtha

### (The Paurava & Kaurava race)

Yayati marries Sharmishtha

↓

Puru (& 2 other sons. Druhyu & Turvasu)

↓

Dushyanta (son) marries Shakuntala

↓

Bharata (son)

↓

Hastin (son)

↓

Kuru (son)

↓

Shantanu (son) marries Satyavati

e-marriage union with Ganga

↓

Bhishma (son)

sa
her pre-marriage
Parashara: Vyasa
two widows of
ika & Ambalika)

**Chitrangada**
(son) (dies childless)

**Vichitravirya** (son)
marries Ambika & Ambalika
(their eldest sister Amba.
reborn male as Shikhandin.
kills Bhishma in the war)

Ambalika)

**Vidura** (son by
low caste woman)

and

Madri

↓

Nakula & Sahadeva
(twin sons by Ashvins)

)

)

adra

nyu (son) marries Uttara

↓

Parikshit (son)

↓

Janamejaya (son)



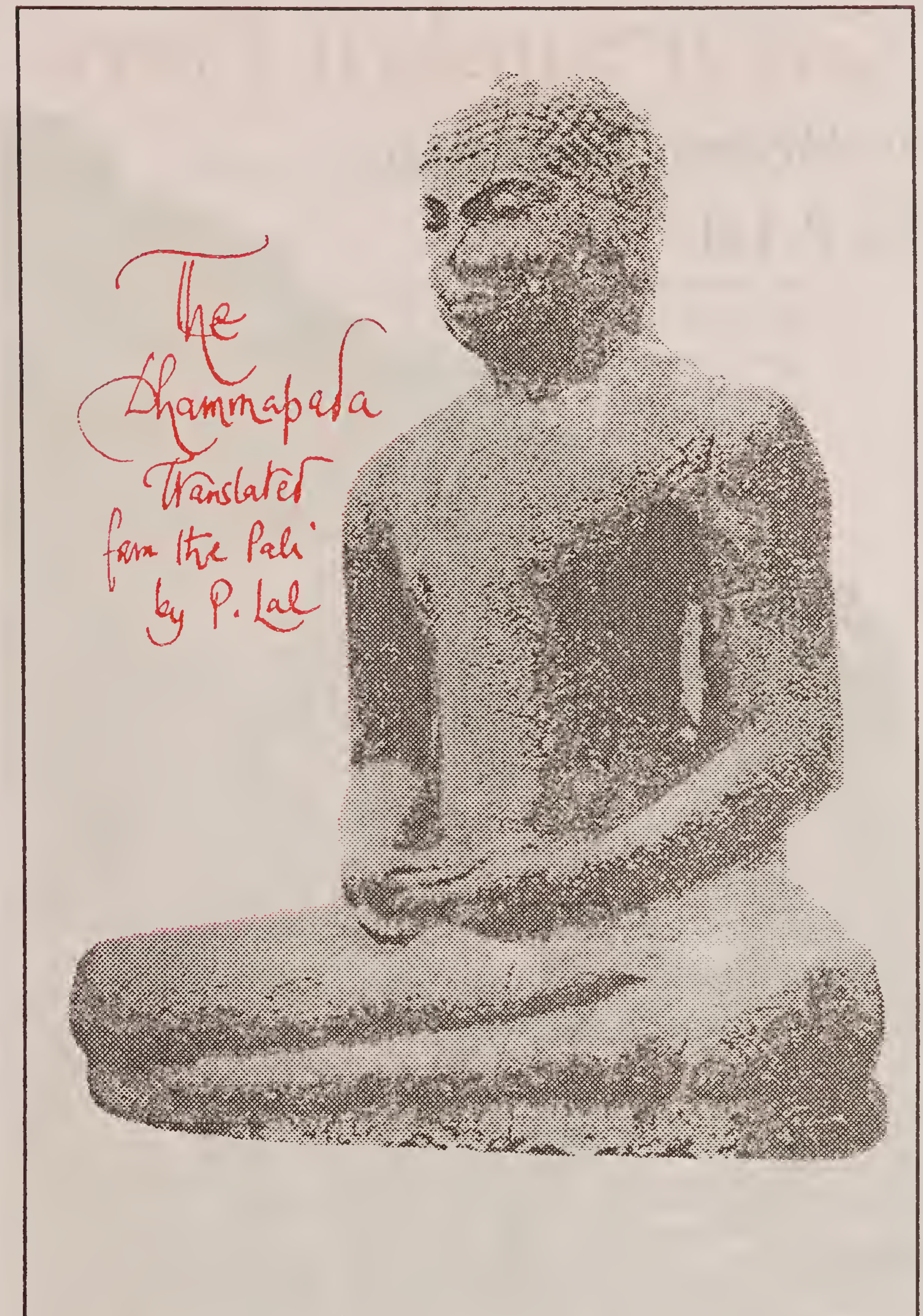
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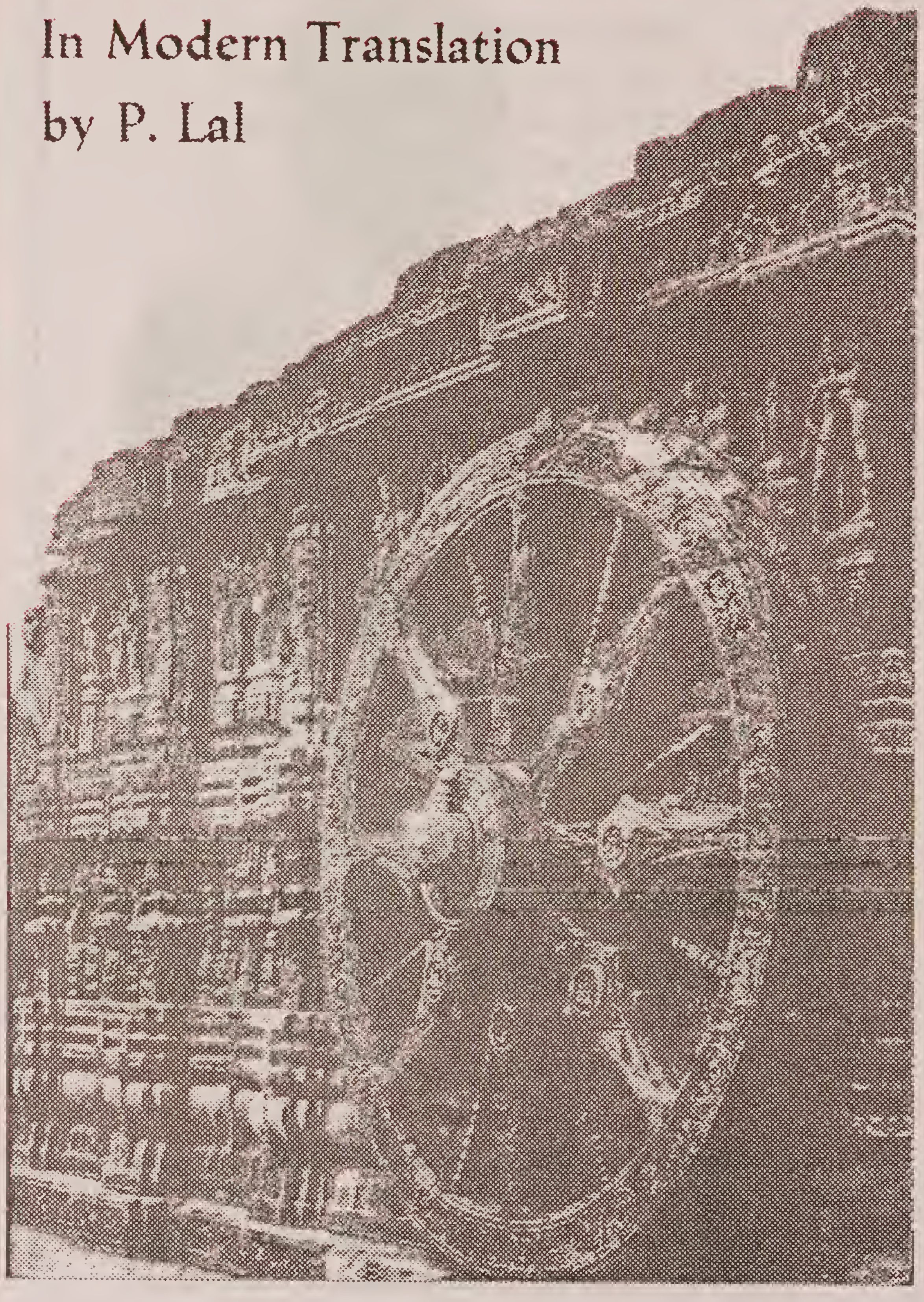

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# The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

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On the following pages are facsimile reproductions of pages from different Mahābhārata fascicules (#133-193) of the Droṇa Parva, showing the Sanskrit notes and callygraphy fascicules and additions by P. Lal. These were prepared for the reading sessions of the transcreation, presented under the auspices of the Sanskriti Sagar in the Library of Dharma and Culture at the G. D. Birla Sabhagar in Kolkata. Started in October 1999, P. Lal has so far (August 2007) read 388 one-hour sessions, followed by question-and-answer periods of up to half an hour.

Transcreated by P. Lal

The ape-emblemed chariot
as it advances
inexorably

21 With a clatter like thunder
will remind the 'earth-lords
of Arjuna's terror.
Which earth-lord
but you
could withstand Arjuna ?

22 The wisest men
praise the superhuman
deeds of Arjuna
who combated even
the three-eyed mahātmā
Trayambaka-Śiva.

दिव्यानि कर्माणि प्रवदन्ति मनीषिणः

23 From Śiva
he received
the difficult boon.
How can another
defeat Arjuna
when you failed ?

कोऽन्य शक्तो रणे जेतुं पूर्वं यो न जितस्त्वया।

24 You are endowed
with incredible valour ;
you have defeated
the Kṣatriya-annihilator
Paraśurāma, : who humbled
even gods and Dānavas.

देवदानव-दर्पहा

25 I seek your permission
today to destroy
excellent Arjuna
who is venomous and fearful
and can kill with a glance
his bitterest enemy."

MAHABHARATA VOL 133 DECEMBER 1979

*The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa [VII : 4 | 1 - 5]* 29

## SECTION 4

1 Karna finished (continued Saṃjaya), and
the Pitāmaha,
pleased, spoke these words suiting time
and place :

देशकालोचितं वाक्यमब्रवीत्
प्रीतमानसः

2 "Like the ocean
the refuge of rivers
Like the sun
the refuge of planets
Like truth

समुद्र इव सिन्धुनां
ज्योतिषामिव भास्करः।
सत्यस्य च यथा सन्तो
वीजानामिव चोर्वरा॥
पर्जन्य इव भूतानां
प्रतिष्ठा सुहृदां भव।
बान्धवास्त्वानुजीवन्तु
सहस्राक्षमिवामराः॥
मानहा भव शत्रुणां
मित्राणां नन्दिवर्धनः।
कौरवाणां भव गतिर्यथा
विष्णुर्दिवौकसाम्॥

s

ngs

ends.

:mies

ls — May you be the refuge of the Kauravas

:a
'alour
mbojas

पाण्डवैः सह पञ्चालैरशिवैः क्रूरकर्मभिः ।
हतो रुक्मरथो राजन् कृत्वा कर्म सुदुष्करम् ॥



O rājā!

33 Drona of the golden chariot performed
impossible feats,
and was cut down by cruel and inauspicious
Pāṇḍavas and Pāñcālas.

34 When ācārya Drona fell,
O rājā,
creatures roared,
and soldiers roared,
and the noise filled the sky.

35 "Aho ! Dhik !
The shame ! The shame !"
The cry rose to the sky
reverberating
in the space between heaven and earth
and filling the main and subsidiary quarters.

36 The gods
The *pitṛs*
His friends —
All saw the mahā-chariot-hero
son of Bharadvāja
Droṇa
fall.

देवताः पितरश्चैव पूर्वे ये चास्य बान्धवाः ।
ददृशुः निहतं तत्र भारद्वाजं महारथं

37 The Pāṇḍavas burst out
in victory shouts
roaring like lions.
The earth trembled
at their lion-roars.

पाण्डवास्तु जयं लब्ध्वा सिंहनादान् प्रचक्रिरे ।
सिंहनादेन महता समकम्पत मेदिनी

द्यां धरां खं दिशो वापि प्रदिशश्च अनुनादयन् ।
अहो धिगिति भूतानां शब्दः समभवद् भृशम् ॥

## *SECTION 9*

1 "What was Droṇa doing when the Pāṇḍavas
and Sṛñjayas
wounded him fatally ?" asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
"He was super-
excellent in the use of all war-weapons
(continued Saṁjaya).

2 What happened ? Did his chariot break down ?
Did his bow
crack ? Did he become careless, and so
lose his life ?

3 How could Pṛṣata's son Dhṛṣṭadyumna
kill undefeatable
Droṇa who could fire endless volleys of
gold-winged arrows,

4 Who was the finest of the twice-born,
splendidly skilful,
adept in varied warfare, capable of shooting
at long distances,

5 Possessor of many supernatural weapons,
a mahā-chariot-
hero who performed the most wondrous
feats in battle ?

6 It must be, then, that fate is more
powerful than
human effort if Droṇa could be killed
by Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

7 He knew the art of handling the four
kinds of weapons —
and yet you tell me that āchārya
Droṇa is killed

*SECTION 13*

1 The assurance of Droṇa to make
Yudhiṣṭhira captive
(continued Sañjaya), when announced to
your soldiers,

2 Enthused them to utter leonine roars,
and
Yudhiṣṭhira

3 Was informed of Droṇa's promise by his
secret spies.
Summoning his brothers and the kings
of his army,

4 Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira said to Arjuna :
"Tiger-among-men,
you have heard of the plan that Droṇa
has in mind.

5 Act then to frustrate his design.
It is true
that foe-crushing Droṇa has added
a condition,

6 But the condition
Today, therefore, see that you are always
by my side,

7 So that Duryodhana's scheme through Droṇa
does not succeed."
Arjuna replied, "I can never agree to
kill my āchārya,

*The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa [VII : 13 / 8 - 15]* 15

8 And I can never desert you when
you need me.
I am ready to give up my life on the field,
O Pāṇḍava,

9 Than be guilty of harming my
own āchārya.
By capturing you, Dhṛtaraṣṭra's son hopes to
win the kingdom,

10 But he will never be able to do so
in this world.
The starry sky will crash, the earth
will shatter,

प्रपतेद् द्यौः सनक्षत्रा पृथिवी शकलीभवेत्

11 But so long as I live, Droṇa cannot
capture you.
Vajrabhṛt-Indra himself can come down with
his thunderbolt,

12 Viṣṇu can come with all the gods,
O Indra-among-rājās,
but so long as I live, you need
not fear

मयि जीवति राजेन्द्र न भयं कर्तुमर्हसि

13 Droṇa who is expert in all weapons,
or anyone else.
O Indra-among-rājās, my decision
is unbreakable.

प्रतिज्ञां मम निश्चलाम्

14 I cannot recall ever lying,
I cannot recall ever being defeated.
I cannot recall ever being untrue
to any promise I have made."

15 Mahārāja, in the camp of the Pāṇḍavas
(continued Sañjaya),

न स्मराम्यनृतं तावन्न स्मरामि पराजयम् ।
न स्मरामि प्रतिश्रुत्य किंचिदप्यनृतं कृतम् ॥

49 Strict-vowed Droṇa O rājā
pulled up his chariot near Yudhiṣṭhira.
Loud wails rose from Yudhiṣṭhira's soldiers :
"The rājā is dead !" हतो राजेति योधानां

50 The soldiers witnessed समीपस्ते
the prowess of Droṇa and said
rājāḥ "The desire of Duryodhana is fulfilled.

51 This very instant Pāṇḍava
Droṇa will subdue Yudhiṣṭhira
and joyfully bring him captive
Dhārtarāṣṭra-s before us and Duryodhana."

52 In the meantime
even as the soldiers were murmuring
the mahā-chariot-hero Arjuna Kaunteya-s
advanced in his chariot
with sky-shattering wheel-reverberations.

53 The slaughter he caused
became a flowing river शोणितोदां
whose water
was blood रथावर्तां कृत्वा
whose whirlpools
were chariots विशसने नदीं
whose blocking stones
were bones and corpses — प्रेतकूलापहारिणीं
a river transporting
creatures to the spirit-world —

54 Whose bubbles
were arrows शरौघमहाफेनां
whose fish
were lances.
Crossing that river

न दिशो नान्तरिक्षम् च न द्यौर्नैव च मेदिनी ।
अदृश्यन्त महाराज बाणभूता इवाभवन् ॥



Pāṇḍava
Arjuna advanced
blinding the Kauravas
with the speed of his attack.

55 Diadem-decked Arjuna
attacked the soldiers of Droṇa
with a maha- bewildering shower of arrows

महता मोहयन्निव

56 Between the stringing
and the firing of each arrow
by illustrious Kaunteya- Arjuna
no time was lost —
or so it seemed to the assembled soldiers.

57 Arrows everywhere — mahārāja! —
the sky and the quarters and the earth —
nothing was visible —
only the swarms of arrows.

58 ~~Nothing visible~~ — O rājā! —
only a maha- dismal darkness
on the field of battle
caused by the Gāṇḍiva-wielder Arjuna.

59 When the sun set
and darkness covered the earth
no one could distinguish
between friend and foe.

60 Droṇa and Duryodhana
and others recalled their soldiers.
Believing that his foes were dispirited
and unwilling to battle further,

61 Bībhatsu- Arjuna also
withdrew his soldiers.
Delighted, the Pāṇḍavas, Sṛñjayas,

नादृश्यत तदा राजंस्तत्र किंचन संयुगे ।
बाणान्धकारे महति कृते गाण्डीवधन्वना ॥

fluttering on the battlefield
like an intricate picturesque painting.

*98* As they attacked Droṇa
we heard the names and lineage of the warriors
exactly as at a *svayamvara* ceremony.

### *SECTION 24*

*1* Dhṛtarāṣṭra said to Saṃjaya :
The kings who re-grouped and attacked
under the leadershing of wolf-waisted Bhīma
were strong enough to rout even the gods.

*2* It's Fate that decides.
Man does what he can
but it is Destiny propelling him
and Destiny deciding the consequences.

*3* Imagine Yudhiṣṭhira
exiled for so long in the forest
matted-haired and wearing black deer-skin
moving about in disguise —

*4* That same Yudhiṣṭhira
now commands this massive army !
Destiny has disaster in store for my son !

*5* There is no doubt
that man is controlled by Destiny
which makes him do even what he does not wish to do.

*6* Addicted to gambling
Yudhiṣṭhira suffered.
Now Destiny brings back his allies.

यो हि धर्मं परित्यज्य भवत्यर्थपरो नरः।
सोऽस्माच्च हीयते लोकात् क्षुद्रभावं च गच्छति॥



7 "The Kekayas
are on my side — and the Kāśis
and Kosalas and Cedis and Vaṅgas

8 The whole earth
is on my side not Arjuna's (Pārtha-) !" — Tāta! Sañjaya!
(मन्द:) This is what foolish Duryodhana told me once.

9 What is it but fate
when Droṇa so well protected by my soldiers
gets killed by (Pārṣata-) Dhṛṣṭadyumna ?

10 How else could death
single out powerful war-eager arms-skilled Droṇa
surrounded by all those rājās ?

11 I am desolated.
I feel faint. How can I live
with both Bhīṣma and Droṇa dead ?

मोहं परममागत:

12 What (Kṣattā-) Vidura warned
when he saw me pampering Duryodhana —
(O tāta! dear one!) All that has come true
for me as well as Duryodhana.

13 To abandon Duryodhana
in order to save my other sons —
that would be heartless --
but at least they would survive.

14 The man who abandons dharma for selfish reasons
debases himself
and gets the worst of everything.

15 Sañjaya
the hope of this kingdom is dead
and I can see nothing is left.

हतोत्साह

युक्त एव हि भाग्येन ध्रुवमुत्पद्यते नरः।
स तथाऽऽकृष्यते तेन न यथा स्वयमिच्छति॥

*15* The words sent Bhagadatta
into a frenzy of anger and he attacked
Govinda- Arjuna and Krishna with a volley of arrows.

*16* Pṛthā- Kunti's son Arjuna
splintered Bhagadatta's bow and arrows
and wounded his vital organs
with seventytwo arrows.

*17* In great agony अतिव्यथितः
Bhagadatta invoked the Vaiṣṇava-weapon
and charging it with mantras
he directed it at Arjuna's breast. Pāṇḍava-

*18* Acting as cover
Keśava- Krishna received upon his own chest the missile
the that had power to annihilate all creatures. सर्वघाति

*19* The weapon changed
Keśava- on Krishna's chest into a celestial garland
all-lotus-lovely and all-flower-fresh :

*20* A lotus filled
with the power of fire and sun and moon
each petal radiant with flame-like beauty
and quivering with the softest breeze.

*21* And Krishna glowed
with that garland on his chest

tial tasi-flowers tasi

Keśava-

तथा पद्मपलाशित्या
वातकम्पितपत्रया ।
शुशुभेऽभ्यधिकं
शरीरतसीपुष्पसंनिभः ।
केशवः केशिमथनः शार्ङ्गधन्वारिमर्दनः

-bow

samdhyā-
nonsoon evening
ouds.

22 Arjuna turned to Krishna
and said sorowfully : "Defectless Krishna
you had promised to be only my charioteer
and never actually fight for me.
Lotus-eyed one
that is what you said by way of promise.
Why have you broken your word ?

23 When I am helpless
or when I cannot fight back
you are free to come to my aid —
but not when I am as capable as now.

24 I have my bow and arrows.
I have the strength to vanquish the worlds
with all their gods and anti-gods and humans.
You know this very well."

25 Krishna replied :
"Son of Kuntī, listen to me.
An old and mysterious story is connected with this.

26 I protect the worlds
by dividing myself into four forms
to ensure the welfare of all creatures.

27 One of my forms
is presently invoted in deep tapasyā
as Nara-Nārāyaṇa in the Badarīka-āshram.
My second form
is Paramātmā engaged in keeping an eye
on the good and not-good deeds of this world.

28 My third form
is what you see in front of you
performing karma in the world of men.

MARCH 26 AT G.D. BIRLA SABHAGAR : 11 A.M.:

Professor P. Lal reads Sanjaya's report to Dhritarastra of the 13th day's battle at Kuruksetra, with Drona promising Duryodhana that he will kill a Pandava, and Abhimanyu becoming the victim of an unethical gang assault led by Jayadratha, in the 321st weekly Sunday session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of Vyasa's Mahabharata.

" शिबिराय

26 March 2006
Session 321

SECTION 33

1 Saṁjaya continued:
We were routed by illimitably energetic Phālguna-Arjuna
and Droṇa's vow remained unfulfilled
because Yudhiṣṭhira was excellently guarded.

फाल्गुनेन - अमितौजसा

Gita p. 3201

2 Your warriors
with their armours shredded accepted defeat
and stood there dust-smeared and anxiety-ridden
staring at the sky's ten directions.

रजस्वला
भृशोद्विग्ना
वीक्षमाणा
दिशो दश

3 With Bhāradvāja-Droṇa's consent
they withdrew from the battlefield
after their humiliation by their determined enemies.

4 As they withdrew
they heard the guna- glory of Phālguna-Arjuna chanted by all Keśava-
as well as praise for the friendship of Krishna and Arjuna.

5 They spent that night
in silent fear and deep introspection.
At dawn Duryodhana went to Droṇa.

ततः प्रभातसमये द्रोणं दुर्योधनोऽब्रवीत्

6 His mind was heavy
with thoughts of the enemy's success.
Though angry he said gently to Droṇa
in the presence of the assembled warriors :

7 "Finest of the twice-born !
You must think of us as already dead
or why did you let Yudhiṣṭhira escape today ?

8 Which enemy
even if he is guarded by the gods
can elude your vigilant eyes on the battlefield ?

9 You were pleased with me
and you gave me a boon — a useless one.
No noble man ever frustrates a bhakta's desire."

10 Droṇa was not pleased
by these words. He replied to the King :
"Do not say this. I am doing my best for you.

11 This whole universe
with its gods and anti-gods
with its Gandharvas and Yakṣas
with its reptiles and rākṣasas
cannot defeat anyone
who is protected by diadem-wearing Arjuna.

12 Only three-eyed Śiva
can proceed against the army that has
Krishna the world-creator and Arjuna on its side.

13 I give you my word
and this is word that will come true :
Today I will kill one of their finest mahā-chariot-heroes.

भरतश्रेष्ठ

34 *[VII : 41 / 22 - 27] The P. Lāl Transcreation*

O incomparable Bharata!

22 The noise filled the sky
covering all the ten directions of the horizon
while Abhimanyu continued with his massacre
of chariot-heroes and horses and elephants.

23 He consumed them
as fire consumes a heap of dry grass
working from the very centre of the Kaurava force.

24 Ringed by your soldiers
and shrouded in dust he could not be seen
as he rushed through all the ten directions.

तं तदा नानुपश्याम: सैन्ये च रजसाऽऽवृते

25 Then suddenly O Bharata
he would come into sight like the radiant midday sun
while he went on killing men and horses and elephants.

क्षणेन पश्याम: सूर्यं मध्यंदिने यथा

26 Mahārāja
we witnessed the grandson of Indra Vāsava
whose prowess equalled that of Indra ! Vāsava

वासवसम

वासवस्यात्मजात्मज

27 Mahārāja
we saw ~~Arjuna~~ Abhimanyu in the middle of the soldiers
like heroic Kārtikeya in the middle of the anti-gods
in the battle of long ago. long

Vahni's son

SECTION 42

स्वबाहुबलदर्पितम्

1 Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked : बालमत्यन्त सुखिनम्
"When Abhimanyu who was a pampered young man
noble and skilled but proud and death-defying

कुशलं वीरं

कुलपुत्रं

2 Pierced through our ranks
on his three-year old splendid chariot-horses
which of Yudhiṣṭhira's warriors followed him ?"

अभिमन्युर्महाराज सैन्यमध्ये व्यरोचत ।
यथा पुरा वह्निसुतोऽसुरसैन्येषु वीर्यवान् ॥

3 Saṃjaya replied : Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Śikhaṇḍin,
Sātyaki, the twins,
Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Virāṭa, Drupada, the Kekaya princes,

4 Dhṛṣṭaketu and the Matsyas all rushed to the battle.
Abhimanyu's sires and maternal uncles made an array

5 That penetrated quickly
the Kaurava ranks following his example.
Seeing them advance your soldiers fled.

6 With your army panicking
your son-in-law Jayadratha rushed to the spot
trying desperately to rally them.

जामाता तव तेजस्वी

7 Mahārāja
Rājā Jayadratha of the Sindhus blocked the Pāṇḍavas
when they came to the aid of Abhimanyu.

8 Bṛhadkṣatra's son Jayadratha
displayed his brilliant prowess as a maha-bowman
and with the strength of his supernatural weapons
he blocked the Pāṇḍavas
like an elephant dominating a flat area.

वार्धक्षत्रि

दिव्यमस्त्रम्

9 Dhṛtarāṣṭra said :
"It seems to me that Jayadratha had a difficult task
because he had to face the brunt
of the Pāṇḍavas' effort to rescue their son.

10 It seems to me Sanjaya
that the Sindhu-ruler must be very brave indeed.
Tell me more about that mahātmā's glorious deeds.

11 What gifts did he lavish?
What sacrifice did he perform ? what tapasyā did
he practise ?

किं दत्तं हुतमिष्टं वा किं सुतप्तमथो तपः /
सिन्धुराजो हि येनैकः पाण्डवान् समवारयत् //

काञ्चनं यद्यदस्यासीत् वर्म चाभरणानि च /
धनुषश्च शराणां च तदपश्याम केवलम् //

14 *[VII : 45 / 1 - 7] The P. Lāl Transcreation*

*20* Only his golden armour
and his shield and ornaments and bow and arrows
could be glimpsed by us now and then.

*21* He was present
in his enemies' midst like the scorching sun
and none dared even look at him
as he systematically slaughtered his adversaries.

## SECTION 45

*1* Sañjaya continued : अन्तकः सर्वभूतानां प्राणान् काले इवागते
As Abhimanyu carried on his massacre of the heroes
he resembled Kāla at the time of universal doom.

Ārjuni- · Antaka

*2* Equal-of-Indra (Śakra-)
the grandson of Indra harassed your warriors
as if he would annihilate the entire array.

*3* O Indra-among-rājās! Abhimanyu pierced
the ranks of his brave-as-Indra enemies like Antaka-Yama
and pounced on Satyaśravas like a tiger on a deer.

*4* With Satyaśravas dead
the other mahā-chariot-heroes quickly readied their weapons
and rushed to attack Abhimanyu.

*5* "I first !" "I first !" अहं पूर्वमहं पूर्वमिति
— shouting and boasting the bull-brave Kṣatriyas (क्षत्रियपुङ्गवा)
fell upon Abhimanyu determined to kill him.

*6* Abhimanyu faced जग्रास तिमिरासाद्य
the wave upon wave of hostile Kṣatriyas
like a *timi*-whale swallowing a shoal of small fish. (क्षुद्रमत्स्यानि)

*7* They clashed with Abhimanyu
and not one returned who was not a coward
like never-reversing rivers that flow to the ocean.

महाग्राहगृहीतेव वातवेगभयार्दिता

*The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa [VII : 45 | 8 - 16]* 15

8 Your army tossed mahā-
like a boat on a tempest-agitated ocean
whose crew shudders at the wind's vehemence.

Śalya's son / Madra's nephew

9 The Madra-ruler's son Rukmaratha
hoping to re-instil courage in his panicking soldiers
said fearlessly : अलं त्रासेन व: शूरा

10 "Take heart, heroes ! नैव कश्चिन्मयि स्थिते
What is Abhimanyu so long as I am here ?
I will take him prisoner today. Trust me!" अहमेनम्
जीवग्राहं न संशय:

11 With these words
that heroic warrior sped towards Abhimanyu
in a dazzling chariot loaded with all war-weapons.

12 With three arrows
he grazed Abhimanyu and screamed his war-cry
and with three more he wounded Abhimanyu's shoulders.

13 But Phālguni-Abhimanyu retaliated
by slicing his bow and cutting off both his arms सव्यदक्षिणौ
and decapitating his larg-eyed and thick-eye-browed-head.

14 Seeing Śalya's son Rukmaratha
who had vowed to capture Abhimanyu dead or alive
cut down by Saubhadra-Abhimanyu

15 Many brave warriors O rājā
who were his friends and who excelled in combat
rushed Abhimanyu with flags flying high on golden poles.
सुवर्णविकृतध्वजा:

16 Those mahā-powerful heroes
pulled taut their palmyra-tall bows
and deluged Ārjuni-Abhimanyu with a hail of arrows.

तालमात्राणि चापानि विकर्षन्तो महाबला: ।
आर्जुनिं शरवर्षेण समन्तात् पर्यवारयन् ॥

MAY 7 AT G.D. BIRLA SABHAGAR AT 11 a.m.

Professor P. Lal reads Sanjaya's report to Dhritarastra of the aftermath of the 13th day's battle at Kuruksetra, with Vyasa consoling Yudhisthira mourning the slaughter of Abhimanyu, by explaining the nature of death, and narrating the story of raja Akampana, in the 327th weekly Sunday session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of Vyasa's Mahabharata.

The lotus-eyed lady called Death listened

23 And meditated deeply. पाणिभ्यां प्रतिजग्राह
Then she burst into a flood of tears.
Pitāmaha Brahmā → तान्यश्रूणि
for the welfare of the worlds
caught her tears in his cupped palms पितामह
and consoled her.

Session 327
7 MAY 2006
Gita Pr. page 1245

## SECTION 54

1 Nārada continued :
Suppressing her grief the helpless lady Death
folded her palms in *añjali* and bending like a creeper
said to Prajāpati-Brahmā:

"Finest of eloquent speakers !
You created me a woman.
How can I knowingly do such a cruel deed ?

विनीय दुःखमबला आत्मन्येव प्रजापतिम् ।
उवाच प्राञ्जलिर्भूत्वा लतेवावर्जिता पुनः ॥

बिभेम्यहमधर्माद् हि प्रसीद भगवन् प्रभो



3 Bhagavan! Prabhu Lord!
I fear adharma.
Grant me your grace.
Sons, friends, brothers, mothers, fathers, husbands —
All are dear to me.

4 If I destroy them
will they not revenge themselves on me?
This is what I fear.
The tears that fall from the eyes of the grief-stricken

5 Fill me with fear. O Deva! O lord of the gods! (*)
Protect me, Bhagavan! O revered one!
Do not send me to the abode of Yama.

6 O Loka-pitāmaha! Grancestor of the cosmos!
I bend my head
I fold my hands
I beg of you —
Grant this only wish. एतदिच्छाम्यहं कामम्

तेभ्योऽहं भगवन् भीता (*) śvara!
शरणं त्वाहमागता ।
यमस्य भवनं देव
गच्छेयं न सुरोत्तम ॥ ...nt āshram of Dhenuka
...pasyā

9 Lord of the gods! Deveśa!
It is not possible for me
to destroy the lives of weeping creatures.
Spare me from such adharma!"

न हि शक्ष्यामि देवेश प्राणान् प्राणभृतां प्रियान् ।
हन्तुं विलपमानानाम् अधर्माद् अभिरक्ष माम् ॥

यशास्विनम् कीर्तिमन्तम् तेजास्विनम् अरिंदम /
यस्य मूत्रं पुरीषं च क्लेदः स्वेदश्च काञ्चनम् ॥

12 *[VII : 55 | 23 - 31] The P. Lāl Transcreation*

23 With all the talents
of character and fame and energy and invincible courage —
whose urine and dung and spit and sweat would be gold.

24 He said to Nārada :
"So let it be by the goodness of your grace."
Nārada replied :
"It will be so." So the king had a son

25 Of radiant looks
fashioned for the planned golden purposes.
When he cried his tears were golden.

26 This was the reason
the king named his son Suvarṇaṣṭhīvi —
a son who enhanced the royal treasury hugely.

27 The king ordered
every object in the kingdom to be made of gold :
houses and walls and forts and Brāhmins' homes.

28 Beds and couches
and plates and cups and saucers and other utensils —
anything in the palace whether domestic or public —

29 Had to be golden.
The golden artifacts went on increasing.
Robbers heard of and saw the wealth of the king,

30 And devised ways
of looting the golden possessions.
Some robbers said : "Let's seize the king's son,

31 He is the gold-mine.
Let's try to get him in our hands."
Driven by greed they slipped inside the palace

32 And succeeded
in kidnapping the king's son Suvarṇaṣṭhīvi
to a forest but the unscrupulous fools

33 Chopped him to pieces
and found no gold inside his body.
With his death all the vow-made gold vanished.

34 Stupidly and wickedly
the robbers then attacked and killed each other.
With that marvellous prince's death they died too.

35 The horrendous robbers
straightaway went to the worst of hells.
Seeing his mahā-tapasyā-born son dead,

36 King Sṛñjaya
was distraught with grief and began lamenting.
Hearing the intense grief of the bereaved king,

37 The deva-ṛṣi Nārada
appeared before the sorrowing Sṛñjaya
and said these words to the woe-numbed monarch —

38 Words which you, Yudhiṣṭhira,
should also listen to carefully. Nārada said :
"Cast off grief, mahārāja !
Cast off this weakness, O lord of men! नराधिप
There is no sorrow and no numbing loss so deep
that can bring back your son.

39 So cast off this folly !
A great king like you should not break down.
Mahārāja !
Get a grip on yourself !
I admire your patience and wisdom.

त्यज मोहं नृपश्रेष्ठ न हि मुह्यन्ति त्वद्विधाः।
धीरो भव महाराज ज्ञानवृद्धोऽसि मे मतः॥

*7* And so it was that
Gaya performed various *yajñas* with huge *dakṣiṇās*
such as the Darśa and Paurṇamāsa and Āgrayaṇa and
Cāturmāsya

*8* For a hundred years.
And so it was that every morning for a hundred years
one lakh cows and sixty thousand horses

*9* Along with gold coins
totalling one hundred thousand and sixty thousand cattle
were distributed by the king to the assembled Brahmins.

*10* He gave away *dakṣiṇā* ददन् नक्षत्रदक्षिणाः
at every auspicious constellation-appearance
with the liberality of a Soma or an Aṅgirasa.

*11* Rājā Gaya
paved the earth with gold and pebbled it with gems
and then gifted it to Brahmins during an Aśvamedha.

*12* In Gaya's sacrifices
the stakes were of pure gold and studded with gems
so that they entranced the minds of all. सर्वभूतमनोहराः

*13* To the happy Brahmins
and to others Gaya gave away those stakes
as well as various other precious articles.

*14* Creatures of the sea
and of islands and rivers
Creatures of woods and forests
and towns and cities
Creatures of heaven
and creatures of the sky

समुद्रवनद्वीपनदीनदवनेषु
नगरेषु च राष्ट्रेषु दिवि व्योम्नि

15 And many other creatures
were pleased with the gifts received at the *yajñas*
and declared that no *yajñas* equalled those of Gaya.

16 The *yajña*-altar
was thirtysix *yojanas* long and thirty *yojanas* broad
and the height of the golden structure was twentyfour *yojanas*.

17 It was studded
with gems and pearls and diamonds.
This altar along with costly garments was gifted to Brāhmins

18 Large-hearted Gaya
distributed *dakṣiṇā* according to the rules of the scriptures.
Twentyfive hills of food remained uneaten after the *yajña*,

19 Along with lakes of drinks
and rivers of delicious liquids that flowed abundantly.
Perfumes and dresses and ornaments were distributed.

20 Gaya was honoured
in the three worlds as a result of that sacrifice.
So were the Eternal Banyan and the Lake af Brahmā.

21 Sṛñjaya !
If such a four-ideals-learned king superior to you
and superior to your son in every way
could die —
then why do you lament the death of your son
who performed no great *yajña* and gave no remarkable
charity ?"

*SECTION 67*

1 Nārada continued :
We have heard that Saṃkṛti's son Rantideva
who had as many as two hundred thousand mahātmā cooks
died nonetheless.

2 Day and night
these cooks served raw and cooked food
to the Brahmin guests who came to the palace.

3 To these Brāhmins
he distributed his wealth obtained by just means.
He subjugated his foes by means of dharma
because he had carefully studied the Vedas.

4 Innumerable animals
came by themselves willingly to his sacrifice
because they were eager to attain heaven
by offering their lives at a scripture-perfect *yajña*.

5 A river of juicy secretions
flowed from the skins that were piled in the kitchen —
the skins of animals sacrificed at the *yajña* —
called Carmaṇvatī the 'Skin-Juice' River.

6 He distributed
shining golden *niṣka*-coins to Brāhmins saying
'These *niṣkas* are yours, these *niṣkas* are yours.'

7 'For you, for you' —
saying this he would distribute the gold coins.
To the still unsatisfied he would gladly give more.

8 In a single day
he gave away crores of gold coins saying
'I have not given much today'. Such was his nature.
What man can be as large-hearted as that ?

9 He would gift wealth saying
'If I fail to give wealth in Brāhmin hands
I have not the least doubt I will suffer.'

10 A *niṣka*-offering is calculated as
one thousand golden bulls with one hundred cows
accompanying each bull and one hundred and eight coins.

11 For a hundred years
Rantideva gave away countless *niṣka*-offerings
to Brāhmins together with the *agnihotṛ* articles.

12 To the *ṛṣis*
he gifted the utensils such as plates and cups and jars
along with carpets and vehicles and palatial dwellings

13 As well as trees
and many varieties of food and drink.
All the utensils of Rantideva were made of gold.

14 Seeing his divine riches
all those who were knowledgeable of the past
chanted his praise in the following song :

15 'Such treasures are not found
in Kubera's den.

नैतादृशं दृष्टपूर्वं कुबेरसदनेष्वपि
धनं च पूर्यमाणं नः किं पुनर्मनुजेष्विति ॥

⊛ आलभ्यन्त तदा गावः
सहस्राणि एकविंशति ।
आलभ्यन्त = to handle, to touch.
to kill; to sacrifice

i's son Rantideva is made of gold.
its came to his palace

⊛

o feed them.
:e jewelled ear-rings would say :

मांसं or मांसम् ?!

for there is not as much meat today as there usually is.'
Whatever gold possessions Rantideva had

Gita Press: इक्कीस हजार गौएं छूकर दान की जाती थीं *

प्रहर्षमाभिमानं च ⊛
सुखप्राप्तिं च चिन्तयन्

n by pious deeds
: no desire to return to earth.

एतद् बुद्ध्वा बुधाः
शोकं न शोकः शोक
उच्यते॥

nanyu should want
ppy in heaven.

by closing their eyes,
or the *yajña*-performers,
or the rich in *tapasyā*.

17 He shines in new glory
like a newly-crowned rājā.
His body is bright
with the light of the moon
like a Brāhmin's body.
So give up yonr grief.

अन्तात् पुनर्भावगतो
विराजते
राजेव वीरो ह्
अमृतात्मरश्मिभि

18 You know the facts.
O defectless one! Be at peace. Show courage.
Grieve if you must for the living
not for those who are in heaven.
Mahārāja!

स्थिरो भूत्वा
धैर्यमाप्नुहि

19 The ill karma of the person
whom the living mourn goes on increasing.
Which is why the wise discard grief
and work only for the welfare of the dead.

20 Living creatures
should remember only the joy and proud glory of the dead. ⊛
Be firm in truth.
Grief is only grief.
The wise have nothing to do with grief.

जीवन्तः एव नः शोच्या न तु स्वर्गगतोऽनघ

एवं विद्वान् समुत्तिष्ठ प्रयतो भव मा शुचः

*The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa [VII : 71 / 21 - 26]* 33

21 This then is the truth. श्रुतस्ते सम्भवो मृत्युः
Rise.
Stand straight.
Do not grieve.
You know the origin of Death
And her great *tapasyā*.

22 You know how Death
behaves equally towards all creatures.
You know that prosperity
cannot be depended upon. चञ्चलाश्च
You have also heard
how Sṛñjaya's dead son was revived. विभूतयः

23 Mahārāja ! Now you know everything.
Do not grieve."
Saying this
Bhagavān Vyāsa disappeared. अन्तरधीयत

24 With the disappearance
of bhagavān Vyāsa whose complexion was dark as a cloudy sky
Yudhiṣṭhira found consolation

25 As a result
of what he had heard about the merits obtained
by the great kings as powerful as Indra
who all obtained wealth by pious deeds.

26 He praised them
in his mind and found peace of mind.
Yet he asked himself a little sadly :
"What will I tell Arjuna ?" Dhanañjaya

पुनश्चाचिन्तयद् दीनः ॐ
किंस्विद् वक्ष्ये
धनञ्जयम्

*Sections 63 - 71 of the Droṇa Parva*
*of the holy Mahābhārata end here.*

as I have failed to list—
may such punishment be mine

47 It I fail to kill Jayadratha
after tonight has passed.
Listen also to the vow
that I now make—

48 If tomorrow the sun sets
without my killing this scoundrel,
I shall immolate myself
in a blazing fire.

49 Neither anti-gods nor gods
nor humans nor birds
nor reptiles nor *pitṛs*
nor creatures of the night
nor the Brahma-ṛṣis
nor the deva-ṛṣis
nor animate or inanimate beings
will succeed in protecting
my enemy from death.

50 Let him run to Rasātala!
Let him hide in the sky!
Let him fly to heaven
or the realm of the Daityas!
With hundreds of arrows
I will slice off the head
of the scoundrelly foe
of my son Abhimanyu,
before the night is over."

51 Saying this,
Arjuna twanged his bow with both hands.
The twang reverberated through the sky,
drowning the sound of his voice.

*The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa [ VII : 73 / 51 - 56 ]* 27

*52* After Arjuna had taken the vow,
Krishna blew on his conch Pāñcajanya
in high excitement.
Arjuna blew on his conch Devadatta.

*53* Aroused with the breath
of undecaying Krishna,
the conch Pāñcajanya
released such a ~~noise~~ vibration
that the whole universe,
the underworld realm,
the sky and the quarters
were atremble as if
a yuga was ending.

*54* When mahātmā Arjuna made his vow,
the commingled din
of thousands of instruments and war-cries
filled the Pāṇḍava camp.

*55* "Your promise and Krishna's conch-blast,"
said Bhīma to Arjuna,
"assures me Duryodhana and his kinsmen
are doomed.

*56* Finest of mortals,
there is truth in your words.
I am pleased with your vow.
Your vow most effectively
wipes out the grief
of Abhimanyu's death,
which nearly succeeded
in withering the lovely
neck-garland you wear."

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असुरसुरमनुष्या: पक्षिणो वोरगा वा
पितृरजनिचरा वा ब्रह्मदेवर्षयो वा ।
चरमचरमपीदं यत्परं चापि तस्मात्
तदपि ममरिपुं तं रक्षितुं नैव शक्ता: ॥

all creatures stare at you as
at the rising moon.

6 You who lay on luxuriously-
covered beds
now must sleep on the bare earth,
pierced with arrows.

7 A strong-armed hero attended by
the loveliest ladies—
now doomed to lie on the battlefield,
surrounded by jackals ;

8 And he who was praised by
bards and minstrels
is welcomed now by horrendously
howling flesh-eaters !

9 Who could kill you, my son,
never helpless,
protected by the Pāṇḍavas and Vṛṣṇis
and Pāñcālas ?

10 O my perfect son ! I long
to look at you,
I am miserable, I will go
to Yama's abode.

11 When will I see that large-eyed,
handsome face
of my son again—so sweet-speaking,
so sweet-smelling ?

12 Shame on Arjuna's skill as archer !
Shame on Bhīma !
Shame on the Vṛṣṇi heroes, and
Pāñcāla valour !

Dhik!

*13* Shame on the Kekayas and Cedis,
the Matsyas
and Sṛñjayas who failed to save you
on the battlefield !

*14* The world is vacant, the world
has no beauty—
I do not see Abhimanyu,
my sight is blurred.

my son

अद्य पश्यामि
पृथिवीं शून्यामिव

*15* You, the son of the wielder
of the Gāṇḍīva,
the heroic son of Vāsudeva's sister—
you, dead ?

17 *16* O my heroic son, you were to me
a treasure seen
and lost in dream. Hai ! Life's
a fleeting bubble.

हा वीर दृष्टो नष्टश्च
धनं स्वप्न इवासि मे।
अहो हि अनित्यं मानुष्यं
जलबुद्बुदचञ्चलम्

18 *17* How will I ever be able to comfort
your young wife,
as forlorn as a cow that
has lost her calf ?

19 *18* How I long to see you, my son !
But you left me
prematurely, before getting a chance
to blossom.

20 *19* Uttarā is the finest of her race,
gentle, soft-spoken,
an illustrious daughter-in-law
whom I love.

21 *20* A lovely girl with large eyes,
full-moon face

16 Come to me, my son!
Come to your desolated mother
who thirsts for a look from you.
Come to me, my son,
and sit in my lap
and suck the milk of my breasts.

Homage to īśāna
to the slayer of Andhaka
to the humbler of pride!

*57* Homage to the father of Kumāra
to the blue-throated deity
to the Pināka-wielder
to the *havana*-receiver
Homage to the god
of truth and prosperity!

*58* Homage to the deity
who is red-skinned and tawny
who roams as the hunter
who cannot be defeated
Homage to the blue-haired god
the wielder of the trident
the celestial-visioned!

*59* Homage to the deity
who preserves and destroys
who is disease and blight
and the energy of fire itself!
Homage to the inconceivable one
the lord of goddess Ambikā
whom all the gods revere!

*60* Homage to the bull-bannered god
whose head is shaven
who has matted hair
who practises brahmacarya
does tapasayā in the waters
who is Brahmā-devoted and unvanquished!

विश्वात्मने विश्वसृजे विश्वमावृत्य तिष्ठते
नमो नमस्ते सेव्याय भूतानां प्रभवे सदा ॥

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa [VII : 80 / 61-65] 19

61 Homage to the deity
who is the ātman of the universe
the creator of the universe
the pervader of the universe
Homage to him again and again
*Namo namaste!*
Homage to the lord of life!

62 Homage to the deity
in whose mouth resides Brahmā!
Śaṅkara Homage to Śiva
who assures the welfare of all!
Homage to the lord of the universe
and the lord of all creatures!

63 Homage to the lord of speech,
to the protector of all,
to the multi-headed and multi-armed,
to the god who is Death personified.

64 Homage to the deity
who is thousand-eyed and thousand-legged
Homage to the deity
of countless deeds
whose complexion is golden
whose armour is golden
who blesses his devotees!
Homage to him
who grants us favours!"

65 Sañjaya continued:
With these praises of Mahādeva,
Vāsudeva-Krishna and Arjuna
pleased and propitiated him
to obtain the weapon.

प्रसादयामास

ब्रह्मवक्त्राय सर्वाय शङ्कराय शिवाय नमः।
नमोऽस्तु वाचस्पतये प्रजानां पतये नमः॥

16 [ *VII: 85 / 19 - 25* ] *The P. Lāl Transcreatio:*

*19* Bow-twang, Veda-chant, arrow-hiss,
sword-swish
and chariot-rattle are heard no more
from Droṇa's camp.

*20* The melody of songs mingling with
the harmony
of musical instruments on the field
is heard no more.

*21* When out of kindness, wishing the
well-being of all,
Krishna came here
to make peace

*22* I said then to stubborn Duryodhana:
'Son, Krishna
is the mediator. Make peace now
with the Pāṇḍavas.

*23* This is the right time, my son.
Don't disobey me,
Duryodhana. If you reject now
Krishna's peace terms

*24* Who is offering them for your welfare,
victory will never
be yours.' But Duryodhana refused
Krishna's offer

*25* Which was offered in all sincerity,
and so invited
his own ruin. He fell in the clutches
of Karṇa,
Duḥśāsana and wicked-minded Śakuni,
and refused Krishna.

न ह्यहं द्यूतमिच्छामि विदुरो न प्रशंसति ।
सैन्धवो नेच्छति द्यूतं भीष्मो न द्यूतमिच्छति ॥



26 Completely misguided, pulled into the
jaws of Kāla,
he rejected me, and listened to Karṇa
and Duḥśāsana.

27 I neither desired nor approved the dice-game,
nor did Bhīṣma;
nor did Vidura, nor Jayadratha
the Sindhu-ruler.

28 Śalya, Bhūrśravas, Purumitra, Jaya
and Aśvatthāman,
Kṛpa and Droṇa—none of them, Sañjaya,
approved of it.

29 Had my son cared to follow
their advice,
he, his friends and relatives would
have enjoyed peace.

30 'Pāṇḍu's sons will enjoy happiness—
they are noble,
soft and sweet-speaking, learned,
loved by all.

स्लक्ष्णा मधुरसंभाषा

31 The follower of dharma obtains happiness
always and everywhere;
after he dies, he obtains the joy
of divine grace.

32 The self-reliant Pāṇḍavas deserve
to enjoy
half of the earth. It is their
ancestral right.

धर्मापेक्षी नरो नित्यं सर्वत्र लभते सुखम् ।
प्रेत्यभावे च कल्याणं प्रसादं प्रतिपद्यते ॥

JULY 30 AT G.D.BIRLA SABHAGAR at 11 am.
Professor P. Lal reads Sanjaya's report to Dhritarastra of Arjuna's battle with is guru Drona at Kuruksetra, and Arjuna's slaughter of Srutayudha and Sudaksina, in the 338th weekly Sunday session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of Vyasa's Mahabharata.

॥

स तु द्रोणं समासाद्य व्यूहस्य प्रमुखे स्थितम्।
कृताञ्जलिरिदं वाक्यं कृष्णस्यानुमतेऽब्रवीत्॥

MAHABHARATA VOL 149 MARCH 1996

# The Mahābhārata

*The Jayadratha-Vadha Parva in the Droṇa Parva*

## SECTION 91

Sañjaya said:

1 After decimating Duḥśāsana's troops,
the mahā-chariot-hero
Arjuna attacked the ranks of Droṇa
to punish Jayadratha.

2 Approaching Droṇa, who stood at
the head of his array,
Arjuna, with Krishna's permission, did *añjali*
and said to Droṇa:

3 "Wish me well, O Brāhmin, bless
me with '*Svasti!*'
With your grace I will pierce
these unpiercable ranks.

4 For I tell you the truth—
you are to me
like my father, like dharma-rāja Yudhiṣṭhira,
like Krishna himself.

5 Sinless finest of Brāhmins, preceptor,
I deserve your protection
in the same way as Aśvatthāmān
deserves it.

## SECTION 96

Sañjaya continued:

*1* O rājā, let me describe to you the remarkable battle
That took place between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas.

*2* The Pāṇḍavas, eager to slice through
the Kaurava ranks,
clashed with Bharadvāja's son Droṇa
and his warriors.

*3* Droṇa too, eager to gain fame,
fought the Pāṇḍavas,
amply assited in his endeavour
by his heroic ranks.

*4* Wishing the welfare of your son,
the two Avanti princes
Vinda and Anuvinda angrily wounded
Virāṭa with ten arrows.

*5* Mahārāja, facing the two heroes
famed for their valour,
Virāṭa fought them and their followers
with equal valour.

*6* It was a horrible clash between the two:
A bloody fight, as between a lion and two elephants.

*7* The son of Yajñasena wounded Bāhlika
With horrendous bone-and-marrow-piercing arrows.

*8* Bāhlika, roused to extreme anger,
wounded the son
of Yajñasena with nine knotted, stone-
sharpened, gold-winged shafts.

भीराणां त्रासजननं शूराणां हर्षवर्धनम्



9 Arrows, lances and spears everywhere
on the battlefield—
fear in the hearts of weaklings, and joy
in the heroes. hearts of

10 The sky and the four quarters were shrouded with
arrows:
Nothing was clearly visible, all was a blur.

11 Govāsana of the Śibis fought Kāśi's mahā-chariot-hero
son,
As an eliphant locks strength with another elephant. → गजः प्रतिगजं यथा

12 Inspired-to-wrath rājā Bāhlīka fought
Draupādī's five sons,
all mahā-chariot-heroes, shining—like the mind
battling the five senses.

13 The five princes, O excellent hero,
shot arrows at him,
like sense-objects riddling the flesh
ceaseless with temptations.

इन्द्रियार्था यथा देहं शश्वत् देहवतां वर:

14 Your son Duḥśāsana wounded the Vṛṣṇi Sātyaki
With nine sharp knotted arrows.

15 Assailed by the powerful mahā-bowman Duḥśāsana,
truly illustrious Sātyaki lost consciousness. सत्यविक्रमः

16 But he quickly recovered, the hero
of the Vṛṣṇis,
and pinned down your mahā-chariot-hero son
with ten *kaṅka*-shafts.

17 O rājā, the two magnificent heroes,
riddled with shafts,
stood on the field like two blossoming
*kiṁśuka*-flame-trees.

→ रेजतुः समरे पुष्पिताविव किंशुकौ

बाह्लीकराज संक्रुद्धो द्रौपदेयान् महारथान्।
मनः पञ्चेन्द्रियाणीव शुशुभे योधयन् रणे ॥

60 "Here is the water!" So saying,
Arjuna shot a missile
in the earth and created a lake
for the horses to drink.

61 Swans and ducks and *cakravākas*
Beautified the lake of pure water
And exquisite full-blown lotuses—

62 A deep lake, with tortoises and fishes,
And visited by ṛṣis.
Nārada came to see that instant lake.

63 A wonder-worker like
Viśvakarma I
Arjuna created an arrow-hall, with arrows for
beams, pillars and ceiling.

64 Seeing the hall created on the spot
by mahātmā Arjuna,
Govinda-Krishna smiled: "*Sādhu! Sādhu!*
Splendid! Splendid!"

## SECTION 100

Sañjaya continued:

1 After the mahātmā son of Kuntī
had created the lake,
held in check the enemy warriors, and
made the arrow-hall,

2 The radiant son of Vasudeva alighted from
the chariot,
And unharnessed the horses wounded by
*kaṅka*-feathered shafts.

AUGUST 27 AT G.D. BIRLA SABHAGAR AT 11 A.M.

Professor P. Lal reads Sanjaya's report to Dhritarastra of Krishna attempting to revive the flagging confidence of Arjuna when the latter is confronted by Duryodhana who is defending Jayadratha against Arjuna on Kuruksetra, in the 342nd weekly Sunday session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of Vyasa's complete Mahabharata.

But the foe-killing dharmātmā son of Indra felt no pain.

7 Valiant Pārtha-Arjuna absorbed arrows,
spears and maces
Like an ocean absorbing hundreds of inflowing rivers.

8 With his incredible energy, Pārtha-Arjuna
swallowed,
as it were, the excellent arrows of the
attacking Indra-like earth-lords.

9 Mahārāja, even the Kauravas pūjā-praised the mahā-wonderful feats
Displayed by Pārtha-Arjuna and Vāsudeva-Krishna.

10 Has anything more remarkable ever
taken place, or will,
than the mid-battle unharnessing of horses,
by Pārtha-Arjuna and Govinda-Krishna?

तत् तु पार्थस्य विक्रान्तं वासुदेवस्य चोभयोः।
अपूजयत् महाराज कौरवा महदद्भुतम् ॥

28 It appeared then that the two heroes
had safely swum
five swollen-with-monsoon
mahā-perilous rivers–
the Irāvati, Vipāśā,
Vitastā, Śatadru
and Candrabhāgā,
to reach the sixth, the Sindhu.

Lāl Transcreation

rishna

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बाहुभ्यामिव संतीर्णौ सिन्धुषष्ठाः समुद्रगाः।

rossed

तपान्ते सरितः पूर्णा महाग्राहसमाकुलाः

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untiring, जरातिगौ

t into

IRĀVATĪ = Rāvī
VIPĀŚĀ = Byāsa (Beas)
VITASTĀ = Jhelum
ŚATADRU = Śatalaj = Sutlej
CANDRABHĀGĀ = Chenāb

ous and

ked like भास्वन्ताविव भास्करौ

23 Sailing safely over the oceanic ranks
of Droṇa's warriors,
foe-crushers the two were as happy as those who
cross an ocean smoothly.

24 Escaping the thick arrow-showers of
Hārdikya- Droṇa and Kṛtavarman,
Krishna and Arjuna shone with the radiance
of Indra and Agni.

25 Studded with the Bhāradvāja- shafts of Droṇa,
and bleeding profusely,
the two Krishnas glowed like flowering-
karṇikāra-mountains.

26 Crossing that huge lake
where Droṇa was the shark,
darts were venomous snakes,
*makaras* the shafts,
Kṣatriyas the deep waters,

27 Emerging out of the Droṇa-weapons-cloud,
thundering with bow-twang and palm-stroke,
mace-and-sword-lightning, the two rose
like sun and moon in darkness.

28 ~~It appeared then that the two heroes~~
~~had safely swum~~
~~five swollen-with-monsoon rivers~~
~~to reach the sixth,~~ Sindhu.

29 And because they had successfuliy countered
the weapons of Droṇa,
all looked upon the two Krishnas as
invincible bowmen.

30 Jayadratha was near them; they looked
at him with intent
to kill him, like two tigers slaughtering
a *ruru*-deer.

31 Mahārāja, their complexions glowed
with such intensity
that your warriors considered Jayadratha
as good as dead.

32 Sitting side by side, red-eyed and
Krishna
screamed their war-cries.

33 The dazzle of Śouri-Krishna holding
the chariot-reins

अभेद्या हि ममास्त्राणामेषा कवचधारणा



11 "I suspect, Krishna," replied Arjuna,
"Droṇa has donned this armour
on Duryodhana. My weapons cannot
penetrate this armour.

12 This armour is charged with the energy
of all the three worlds, Krishna.
Only Droṇa knows the secret—and I
learnt it from him.

13 No arrows can pierce this armour,
O Govinda-Krishna.
Even Maghavat-Indra cannot pierce it
on the battlefield.

14 You know this, Krishna. Why then
are you confusing me?
What has happened in the three woreds,
what is happening now,

जानंस्त्वमपि वै कृष्ण मां विमोहयसे कथं

15 And what will happen in the future,
are all known to you.
Slayer-of-Madnu Krishna, who knows
this better than you?

16 The fact is, Krishna, that Duryodhana,
clad in armour
by Droṇa, does battle knowing full well
the armour is invincible.

17 But, Mādhava-Krishna, he does not know
what one wearing such armour
should do. He wears it like a woman
flaunting an unbecoming ornament.

18 So, Janārdana-Krishna, observe
my bow-skill and
my arm-strength, while I pierce
this armour-shielded Kaurava.

*The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa [VII : 103 / 19-26]* 17

19 The lord of the gods Deveśa-Brahmā
gave this to Aṅgiras;
Aṅgiras gave it to Brhaspati,
Puraṁdara
सुरपति

22 But even as he nocked the arrows
to his bow's centre –
arrows capable of pulverising
the most proficient warriors – though
self,
श्रीहस्तणा वा
स्वयं कृतं

21 It cannot shield this wicked wearer
from the arrows I shoot."
Sañjaya continued: Arjuna strung his bow
with mantra-charged arrows.

23 Droṇa's son Aśvatthāman sliced them
with an all-baffling weapon. no #

Seeing his arrows severed from afar
by Veda-versed Aśvatthāman, #

24 श्वेतवाहन White-horse-vehicled Arjuna, astonished,
said to Keśava-Krishna: no #

"Janārdana-Krishna, I Cannot use
these arrows twice.
#
25 If I do, they will kill me
and rout my army."
नैतदस्त्रं मया शक्यं
द्वि प्रयोक्तुं जनार्दन

no #
Duryodhana attacked the two Krishnas
with nine shafts each,
#
26 Resembling venomous snakes. He showered

27 Another fierce mahā-arrow-shower! dava-Arjuna
And your soldiers exulted, O rājā,
and beat upon musical instruments eld.
and shouted raucous war-cries.

अस्त्र मामव हन्याद् हि हन्याच्चापि बलं मम

27 Foiled by Bhīma's ploy, the rākṣasa
slipped inside his chariot.
He kept swooping skywards and burrowing
in the earth,

28 Changing countless forms at will,
big and small.
Gross, subtle, massive, he roared
like storm-clouds.

29 Whirling everywhere, he babbled
in many tongues.
Suddenly, out of the sky dropped
thousands of arrows,

30 Śakti-spears, *kaṇapās*, lances,
pikes, axes,
fire-pipes, spiked maces, *bhindipālas*,
and short javelins,

31 As well as rocks, scimitars, steel balls
and thunderbolts.
That torrent of weapons unleashed
by the rākṣasa

32 Decimated the soldiers of Pāṇḍu's son.
That weapons-deluge
slaughtered many elephants in the ranks
of the Pāṇḍavas,

33 And many horses and foot-soldiers as well,
O rājā.
Killed by the rākṣasa's arrows, chariot-heroes
slumped in their seats.

34 Blood the waters
Chariots the eddies
Elephants the whirlpools

Chariot-umbrellas the swans
Flesh-and-marrow the slush
Chopped arms the snakes—

35 A river flowed on that battlefield,
surrounded by rākṣasas,
sweeping in its currents the Cedīs,
Pāñcālas and Sṛñjayas.

36 O rājā, seeing the rākṣasa fearlessly
dominating the field
with devastating prowess, the Pāṇḍavas
were near despair.

37 Meanwhile the soldiers of your army
exulted freely—
they blew horripilating sounds on
musical instruments.

38 Like an elephant unable to tolerate
a hand-clap,
Bhīma could not bear the noise
of the exultation.

39 Eyes copper-red in anger, blazing like
foe-consuming fire,
Bhīma invoked the Tvāṣṭr-weapon, as if
he was Tvaṣṭa himself.

40 Suddenly, a thousand arrows
as if from nowhere.
These arrows created a slaughter
of your warriors.

41 That special weapon invoked by Bhīma
on the battlefield
dissipated the rākṣasa's mahā-māyā
and wounded him.

is as meritorious as one who gifts the earth
itself to Brahmins.

50 We have heard of many rājās
who gifted the earth
to Brahmins and attained heaven
as a result.

51 O dharmātmā hero, with palms folded
in *añjali*,
I ask you: Do something even greater
than gifting the earth.

52 Only one person, Krishna, remover of
a friend's fears,
will sacrifice his life for a friend.
You are the second.

53 Only a true hero reaches out to help
another hero
battling for fame. An ordinary human
does not do so.

54 O descendant of Madhu, that being so,
I do not see
how anyone can help Arjuna now
except you.

55 I remember a time when Arjuna
praised your feats
repeatedly in detail. I was delighted
to listen.

56 He said, 'Sātyaki is dexterous;
all-weapons-expert;
alert, prudent, heroic; never confused
on the battlefield.

शिष्यो मम सखा चैव प्रियोऽस्याहम् प्रियश्च मे।
युयुधानः सहायो मे प्रमथिष्यति कौरवान्॥

*The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa* [VII : 110 / 57-65] 17

*57* He is a mahātmā mahā-chariot-hero,
mahā-shouldered,
mahā-muscled, mahā-chested, mahā-jawed,
mahā-powerful, mahā-valiant.

*58* Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki is my pupil,
my loved-and-loving sakhā-friend,
I love him, he loves me; with his help,
I can crush the Kauravas.

*59* O Indra-among-rājas, even if Keśava-
Krishna dons armour
to help us; even if Balarāma, Aniruddha
and heroic Pradyumna,

*60* Or Gada, Sāraṇa, Sāmba and the Vṛṣṇis
Decide, mahārāja, to come to our aid,

*61* I will prefer to have tiger-among-men Sātyaki,
For there is none to equal his splendid prowess.'

*62* Tāta! Dear one! Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's words
in the Dvaita forest
were said to me in an assembly of nobles.
You were not present.

*63* O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, do not
disappoint the hopes
Dhanañjaya-Arjuna, I, and Bhīma
have in you.

*64* On my return from a pilgrimage,
in Dvārakā
I noticed the profound bhakti you have
for Arjuna.

*65* O descendant of Śini, no one
except you

तत्राहमपि ते भक्तिमर्जुनं प्रति दृष्टवान्

29 Lord of men, with a single arrow
he sliced
the flagstaff of Droṇa's chariot.
Droṇa replied,
shrouding his steeds, charioteer.
chariot and flagstaff

30 With swift arrows like thick swarms
of locusts.
Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki also, unperturbed,
with countless shafts

31 Shrouded Droṇa. Droṇa said
to Sātyaki:
"Your cowardly guru has run off,
leaving me here.

32 Descendant of Madhu, he fled,
doing *pradakṣiṇa*
to me, keeping me on his right.
You will die

33 At my hands today, unless you flee
like your ācārya."
Sātyaki replied: "Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
has commanded me,
so I follow in Dhanañjaya-Arjuna's path.
*Svasti te Brāhmaṇa*!

34 May you fare well, Brahmin!
I will not waste time.
The path of the guru is the path
of the disciple.

ācārya /

35 I will quickly follow wherever
my guru goes."
Saying this (continued Sañjaya),

आचार्यानुगतो मार्गः शिष्यैरन्वास्यते सदा
गच्छामि स्वस्ति ते ब्रह्मन् न मे कालात्ययो भवेत्

the Śini-descendant
rushed ahead, slipping past
ācārya Droṇa,

36 And then, O rājā, to his charioteer
he said:
"Droṇa will try his very best
to stop me.

37 Proceed carefully, charioteer, and
listen to me.
In the distance is the splendid army
of the Avantis.

38 Beside them are the ranks of
the southern warriors,
and alongside is the army
of the Bāhlīkas.

39 Near them is the army of
resolute Karṇa.
Remember, charioteer, ~~they are all~~
separated from each other,

40 Yet dependent mutually, ~~reinforcing~~
they reinforce each other.
Drive your steeds confidently
through them.

41 Drive me at medium speed
to the spot
where the Bāhlīkas are stationed,
weapons ~~arms~~ upraised,

42 Where the southerners are, led
the by Sūta's son Karṇa,
where the ranks of elephants,
horses, chariots

KRTAVARMAN: Vṛṣṇi chief
Genealogy: Descended from Viṣṇu–
Brahmā – Atri – Candra – Budha –
Nahuṣa – Yayāti – Yadu –
Kārtavīrya – Madhu – Vṛṣṇi –
Śini – Satyaka – Sātyaki (Yuyudhāna)
Bhoja – Hṛdika – Kṛtavarman.
had 4 sons, one being Śūra.
Śūra's wife Māriṣā had
10 sons, one being Vasudeva,
who is the father of Krishna.
After his death in the club-
fight of Yādavas, he attains
the realm of the Maruts.

Sātyaki is younger son of
Yudhajit (Yuyudhāna)
a friend of Krishna.

Kunti is daughter of Śūra + adopted
daughter of Ugrasena – she is niece
of Vasudeva & Krishna's father's sister.

*The P. Lāl Transcreation*

...e advice

...oing

...6.

Krishna advised

Krishna failed
... rājā.

ineffectual,

...alous द्वैधीभावं धर्मे

...oked plans

...erent words,
मनुजाधिपसत्तम

...h!
...rlds,
...na

maha-ch decided that war with the Kauravas
was the only option.

54 O bestower of honour! मानद
maha-ch This terrible destruction
is the result entirely
of your fault.
Do not put the blame
on Duryodhana.
नैनं दुर्योधने दोषं
कर्तुमर्हसि मानद

55 O Bharata, from start to middle
to finish, you did not do
not a single good deed. You are
the root of this defeat.

सर्वलोकस्य तत्त्वज्ञः सर्वलोकेश्वरः प्रभुः ।
वासुदेवस्ततो युद्धं कुरूणामकरोन्महत् ॥

*56* So steady yourself and face the truth
of things. Listen
to my description of the battle resembling
the god-antigod clash.

*57* When Śini's grandson of truly
incomparable prowess
pierced your ranks, Bhīma's Pāṇḍava troops
swooped on your army.

*58* Single-handed, the mahā-chariot-hero
Kṛtavarman faced
the attack of the enraged Pāṇḍavas
led by Bhīma.

*59* Like a seashore facing the sweep
of sea waves,
Hṛdikā's son Kṛtavarman faced
the Pāṇḍava warriors.

*60* We witnessed the wonderful valour
of Kṛtavarman.
All the Pāṇḍava forces failed
to overpower him.

*61* Strong-armed Bhīma blew his conch-shell
and wounded Kṛtavarman
with three swift arrows, to the delight
of the Pāṇḍava troops.

*62* Sahadeva wounded Hṛdikā's son
with twenty arrows,
Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira did so with five,
Nakula with a hundred,

*63* Draupadī's sons wounded him with
seventy-three arrows,
Ghaṭotkaca with seven, and
Dhṛṣṭadyumna with three,

13 Afflicted by Sudarśana,
the grandson of Śini,
remarkably nimble
and possessed of valour
equalling Indra's, → इन्द्रसमानवीर्य
speedily slew
with his arrows the steeds हयान् निहत्याशु
of Sudarśana, and screamed
his pealing war war-cry. → ननाद नादम्

14 With a broad-headed *bhalla*
shot with the force
Śakra- of Indra's thunderbolt,
he cut off the head
of Sudarśana's charioteer;
then the finest of Śinis,
with a razor-sharp arrow
that blazed like the fire कालानलसंनिभेन
of Kāla at doomsday,

15 Sliced from the trunk
of brave Sudarśana
his ear-ringed head, ⊛
his full-moon handsome head,
his enchanting-faced head,
exactly, O rājā,
as the thunderbolt-wielder
Indra decapitated
Bala in the past.

सकुण्डलं पूर्णशशिप्रकाशं ⊛
भ्राजिष्णु वक्त्रं विचकर्त देहात्।
यथा पुरा वज्रधरः प्रसह्य
बलस्य संख्येऽतिबलस्य राजन्॥

NOVEMBER 26 AT G.D. BIRLA SABHAGAR at 11 a.m.

Professor P. Lal reads Sanjaya's report to Dhritarastra of Satyaki's rout of the Kamboja and Yavana armies of the Kauravas, and the flight of Duryodhana and his brothers from the battlefield, in the 350th weekly Sunday session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of the complete Mahabharata of Vyasa.

filling all with awe.

18 The magnificent warriors
on the field of battle
applauded the wonderful
feat of Sātyaki,
obliterating all foes
within arrow-range,
like a conflagration
that consumes whatever
lies in its way.

Session 350
26 Nov. 2006
Sita, p. 3423

SECTION 119

The bull-brave Vṛṣṇi (continued Sañjaya),
mahātmā Sātyaki,
wise Sātyaki, after killing Sudarśana,
said to his charioteer:

"Chariots
Horses
Elephants—
Arrows and śakti-spears

ततः स सात्यकिर्धीमान् महात्मा वृष्णिपुङ्गवः।
सुदर्शनं निहत्याजौ यन्तारं पुनरब्रवीत्॥

सधनुर्मण्डलः संख्ये तेजोभास्कररश्मिवान् ।
शारदीवोदितः सूर्यो नृसूर्यो विरराज ह ॥

10 *[VII : 120 / 5 - 11] The P. Lāl Transcreation*

The brave warrior
Looked like the peak
Of Meru mountain.

5 Radiating resplendence, and brandishing
a bow drawn taut

... with the glory

वृषभस्कन्धविक्रान्तो
वृषभाक्षो नरर्षभः ।
तावकानां बभौ मध्ये
गवां मध्ये यथा वृषः ॥

:yes like a bull's,

›ps like a bull

:d-graceful,

enly appearing

8 Your soldiers attacked, determined
to kill him.
After he had crossed Droṇa's troops and
the uncrossable Bhojas,

9 And the Jalasaṁdha sea, the Kāmbojas,
the crocodiles
of Hṛdika's son—after crossing
that ocean-army—

10 Sātyaki was encircled by your army's
infuriated chariot-heroes.
Duryodhana and Citrasena,
Duḥśāsana and Viviṁśati,

11 Śakuni, Duḥsaha, youthful Durdharṣa,
Krātha and other
brave warriors, expert in all weapons,
difficult to defeat,

*12* Angrily followed Sātyaki, trailing him
as he advanced.
a fearsome din arose from
your army's ranks,

*13* Like the roar of the wind-lashed ocean
on a *parva*-day.
Seeing them rushing to attack him,
the illustrious Śini

*14* Smiled, and advised his charioteer,
"Advance slowly.
The powerful army of the rage-filled
sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra,

*15* Replete with elephants, horses, chariots
and foot-soldiers,
is attacking me, drowning the quarters
with chariot-noise,

*16* And making the earth, the sky-dome
and
Charioteer, I shall block this army
in battle

*17* Like the seashore blocking the swelling
full-moon sea,
the crocodile-abode. My valour is like
the valour of Indra

*18* See me annihilate my foes with
sharp arrows.
See them killed —foot-soldiers, elephants,
horses, chariot-heroes—

*19* Mutilated by my sharp arrows
scorching like fire."

तत्राद्भुतं महाराज दृष्टवानास्मि संयुगे।
यद् द्रोणो रभसं युद्धे पाञ्चाल्यं नाभ्यवर्तत॥



*34* With five depressed-knot arrows
he wounded Droṇa,
with one he sliced his flag, with seven
wounded his charioteer.

*35* Mahārāja, I saw a wonderful sight—
however hard he tried,
Droṇa was unable to proceed against
the Pāñcāla prince.

*36* O gracious monarch, seeing Droṇa contained,
the Pāñcālas encircled him;
they were eager, O rājā, to gain victory
for Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira.

*37* Then, O rājā, they poured a deluge
of fiery darts,
महाधनैः and expensive *tomaras*, and all manner
of other weapons.

*38* O rājā! Droṇa blocked them all with
his counter-weapons,
like the wind dispersing rain-clouds—
an enchanting spectacle!

*39* Slayer-of-hostile-heroes Droṇa shot
a mahā-terrifying shaft,
a sun-and-fire-dazzling weapon,
at Vīraketu's chariot.

महाघोरं
सूर्यपावकसंनिभम्

*40* O rājā, that shaft sliced through
the body of the Pāñcāla
and, dripping blood and spitting fire,
slid into the earth.

*41* And the joy of the Pāñcāla dynasty
toppled from his chariot,

ततोऽपतद् रथात् तूर्णं पाञ्चालकुमारनन्दनः।
पर्वताग्रादिव महांश्चम्पको वायुपीडितः॥

like a champak tree toppling down a hill
by a storm.

42 No sooner had the rājā's son
been killed
than the Pāñcālas swiftly
encircled Droṇa.

43 O Bhārata, Citraketu, Sudhanva, Citravarma
and Citraratha
grieved the loss of their illustrious
brother Vīraketu.

44 United and determined, they rushed
on Bharadvāja's son,
shooting arrows like clouds at summer-end
disgorging rain.

45 Wounded by the mahā-chariot-hero
royal brothers,
bull-like twice-born Droṇa, infuriated,
decided to kill them.

46 He enveloped them in a massive
arrow-net.
They reeled, wounded by arrows shot
from car-taut position.

47 O excellent rājā, they wondered:
*What do we do?*
Taking advantage of their confusion,
Droṇa, pleased, O Bharata,

48 And angry too, deprived them of their
chariots, charioteers
and horses. Then, with *bhalla*-arrows,
the illustrious hero

कर्तव्यं नाभ्यजानन् वै कुमारा राजसत्तम /
तान् विमूढान् रणे द्रोणः प्रहसन्निव भारत ॥

Transcreated by P. Lāl 8

34 Splintered by the arrows of the
son of Bharadvāja,
the mace, O Kaurava world-lord, crashed
on the earth.

35 Seeing his mace-attack frustrated, brave
and angry
Dhṛstaketu hurled a lance and a flaming
gold-inlaid śakti.

36 Slicing the lance with five, and the śakti
with five more arrows,
Droṇa saw them fall like two snakes
mangled by Garuḍa.

37 Determined to kill Dhṛṣṭaketu,
the valiant son
[illegible] an arrow

स तस्य कवचं भित्वा ⊛
हृदयं चामितौजसः ।
अभ्यगाद् धरणीं बाणो
हंस पद्मवनं यथा ॥

~
of his breast-plate.
his chest, ⊛
in a lotus-lake,
ie earth.

पतङ्गं हि ग्रसेच्चाषो
यथा क्षुद्रं बुभुक्षितः।
तथा द्रोणोऽग्रसच्छूरो
धृष्टकेतुं महाहवे॥

⊛

7

oping on and
isect,

⊛

Drona with his arrows, in the mahā-battle,
devoured Dhrṣṭaketu.

40 With the Cedi-rājā killed in this manner,
his infuriated son,
skilled in all weapons, decided to take
his father's place.

41 (Drona only smiled, and sent him
to Yama's abode
with his arrows, like a voracious tiger killing
a yearling in a forest.

42 O Bhārata! While the Pāndavas were
getting decimated,
Jarāsaṁdha's brave son Sahadeva
attacked Drona.

43 Like clouds shrouding the sun,
mahā-muscled Sahadeva
shot arrow-showers that made Drona
no longer visible.

तेन वै परमां पूजां कुर्वता मानितो ह्यसि।
Transcreated by P. Lal
नार्जुनोऽहम् घृणी द्रोण
12
भीमसेनोऽस्मि ते रिपुः॥

49 True, he honoured you by offering
you his pūjā-respect.
But I am not gentle Arjuna, O Droṇa.
I am your enemy Bhīmasena.

50 You are like a father to us,
our guru,

पिता नस्त्वं गुरुर्बन्धुस्तथा
पुत्रास्तु ते वयम्।
इति मन्यामहे सर्वे
भवन्तं प्रणताः स्थिताः॥

upon ourselves
:
ways with,
have said today,

अद्य तद् विपरीतं
ते वदतो अस्मासु दृश्यते।
यदि त्वं शत्रुमात्मानम्
मन्यसे तत् तथा अस्त्विह॥

. If you
my, then
I will treat you

तच्च ते सदृशं शत्रोः
कर्म भीमः करोमि अहम्॥

."
:, like the rod
, taka-doom.

कालदण्डमिवान्तकः

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa



पाञ्चालानां ततो मुख्यौ ⊛
राजपुत्रौ महारथौ ।
रथावन्यौ समारुह्य
बीभत्सुमभिजग्मतुः ॥

...dhana smashed
...d chariot,
... flag, with one blow
...e.
...rioteer and horses,

your son,
the foe-afflicter, climbed in the chariot
of Madra's ruler Śalya.

44 And the two princes of Pāñcāla,
Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujas,
mahā-chariot-heroes, drove in two
other chariots to Bībhatsu-Arjuna. ⊛

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7 JAN 200

वर्तमाने महाराज #
संग्रामे लोमहर्षणे ।
व्याकुलेषु च सर्वेषु
पीड्यमानेषु सर्वशः ॥

...ilating battle, 1 G 1a
... warriors p.34
weary and
...icted; #

43 As he lay dying, while Karṇa
lamented and
respectfully circumambulated him
in pradakṣiṇa.
Having unchariotted his bitter enemy,
Karṇa, Bhīma smiled
44 And shrouded him with countless
arrows, śataghni-
fire-missiles, and śaṅku-javelins.
But Karṇa,
अतिरथः the great chariot-hero, did not
leave the field,
45 A foe-chastiser harassed and mangled
परंतप By fiercely angered Bhīma.

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2007

सर्वथा विरथः कर्णः
पुनर्भीमेन निर्जितः।
रथमन्यं समास्थाय
पुनर्विव्याध पाण्डवम्॥

⊛ 0 ~ 134
a, chariotless Karṇa (Sita
Sañjaya) p. 3475)
hariot and resumed
on the Pāṇḍava. ⊛

ते हता न्यपतन् भूमौ वातरुग्णा इव द्रुमाः ॥

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

22 Killed all these sons of yours
with an arrow each.
They toppled on the ground like
torrent-tossed trees.

दृष्ट्वा विनिहतान् ⊛ our mahā-chariot-
पुत्रांस्तव राजन् महारथान् । ed,
अश्रुपूर्णमुखः कर्णः क्षत्तुः , and recalled
संस्मार तद् वचः ॥ ⊛
tā son of
a female slave.

24 Then, climbing into another excellently
equipped chariot,
he recommenced his attack on
Pāṇḍava Bhīma.

25 With gold-feathered arrows the two
re-started combat,
with stone-sharpened shafts.
How magnificent
They looked ~ like two clouds
drenched in sunlight.

व्यभ्राजेतां यथा मेघौ संस्यूतौ सूर्यरश्मिभिः ।

Transcreated by P. Lāl

32

91 And so the Sūta's son Karṇa continued
to harass
Bhīma on the battlefield with
his sharp arrows,
so much so that at times Bhīma
was made unconscious.

92 But Karṇa also, recalling the words कुन्त्या
of Kunti, वचः स्मरन्
refrained from killing Bhīma,
preferring instead धनुष्कोट्यग्रेण
to nudge and poke him with one तं कर्ण
end of his bow.

93 Infuriated by Karṇa's poking, सोऽभिकृत्य
Bhīma breathed like a snake, परामृशत्
Bhīma snatched the bow and hit it
on Karṇa's head.

94 Struck by Bhīma, his eyes red मूर्धन्य-
with anger, ताडयत्
Rādheya-Karṇa nonetheless smiled and
said to him विहसन्निव

पुनः पुनस्तुबरक मूढ औदरिकेति च।
अकृतास्त्रकम मा योत्सीः बाल संग्रामकातर ॥
The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa 33.

95 Again
And again:
"Beardless eunuch!
Idiot!
Glutton!
You zero in weapon-skills!
Coward!
Boy!
Don't ever dare
to fight anyone!

96 Low-minded Pāṇḍava!
Go where the food is ~
delicious food!
That's the place for you!
Not a field of battle!

97 Bhima!
Go to a forest! मूलपुष्पफलाहारो
Gobble roots, shoots, and fruits! व्रतेषु नियमेषु
Rites and rituals — that's for you! न त्वं
What do you know of fighting? युद्धविशारद:

Transcreated by P. Lāl 12

13 Seeing Sātyaki approaching, Keśava-Krishna
said to Arjuna,
"Son of Pṛthā, look! Śini's grandson
is here.

14 This truly illustrious hero is
your pupil
and your loved-and-loving friend,
your sakhā also.
This bull-brave hero treats foes
like grass-blades.

15 Diadem-decked Arjuna! He is here,

एष शिष्यः सखा चैव तव प्राणैः प्रियतमः
तव सत्यपराक्रमः।
सर्वान् योधांस्तृणीकृत्य
विजित्ये पुरुषर्षभः॥

as ... ing the hosts ... aki is here
after routing
Drona and heroic Kṛtavarman
of the Bhojas.

73 What Pārtha-Arjuna did ~
Lopping off the sword-wielding arm
Of Bhūriśravas
To save me ~ well,
All he did was
To cheat me of my chance
To win that glory.

74 What will be, भवितव्यं हि यद् भावि
will be. दैवं चेष्टयतीव च ।
The hand of fate
does all. सोऽयं हतो विमर्देऽस्मिन्
Bhūriśravas died किमत्र अधर्म
fighting a war. चेष्टितम् ॥
What adharma
have I done?

75 Long ago, Vālmīki
chanted this śloka:
'You say, Hanuman, again and again,
On no account should women be slain.'

अपि चायं पुरा गीतः श्लोको वाल्मीकिना भुवि ।
न हन्तव्याः स्त्रिय इति यद् ब्रवीषि प्लवङ्गम ॥

FEBRUARY 11 AT G.D. BIRLA SABHAGAR AT 11 A.M.
Professor P. Lal reads Sanjaya's report to Dhritarastra of Arjuna attacking Jayadratha; Karna and Duryodhana discussing battle strategy; Arjuna defeating Karna in a skirmish; and Arjuna launching a devastating offensive against the Kauravas, in the 361st weekly Sunday session of his sloka-by-sloka English transcreation of Vyasa's complete Mahabharata.

—— L ——

तदवस्थे हते तस्मिन् भूरिश्रवसि कौरवे।
यथा भूयोऽभवद् युद्धं तन्ममाचक्ष्व सञ्जय॥

भूरिश्रवसि संक्रान्ते परलोकस्य भारत।
वासुदेवं महाबाहुरर्जुनः समचूचुदत्॥

MAHABHARATA VOL 168 OCTOBER 1997

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa
transcreated from the Sanskrit by P. Lal

Volume 168
The Jayadratha-vadha-parva in the Drona Parva

Session 36Φ

SECTION 145 11 FEB 2007

(Sita p. 3513)

1 "With the Kaurava Bhūriśravas killed,"
asked Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
"tell me, Sañjaya,
what happened on the battlefield."

2 O descendant of Bhārata
(Sañjaya replied),
With the departure of Bhūriśravas
To the other world,
Mahā-muscled Arjuna
Urged
Vāsudeva-Krishna
With the following request:

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

17

63 योगमत्र विधास्यामि ⊛ hariot-heroes

सूर्यस्यावरणं प्रति।

असंगत इति व्यक्तं -ruler,

ry.

64 द्रक्ष्यत्येकं स सिन्धुराट्॥ ⊛

To shroud the sun,

So that the Sindhu-rājā alone

Thinks that the sun has set.

65 Prabhu! Powerful one!

That despicable man will exult,

Thinking he is safe

And your death certain.

And he will emerge from his cover.

66 O finest of the Kuru clan!

That is your chance! तत्र छिद्रे प्रहर्तव्यम्

Strike him then!

Don't forget your duty! त्वयास्य कुरुसत्तम।

Don't start believing व्यपेक्षा नैव कर्तव्या

That the sun has set." गतोऽस्तमिति भास्करः॥

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

33

10 Shameless Karṇa! निर्लज्ज रणमुत्सृज्य

slokas 10 – 15 not in Regular Recension – only in Southern!

Again and again गच्छसे वै पुनः पुनः
You have chosen
To flee the field.
Yet Bhīma,
Keeping his greatness
And family name
In mind,

11 Never said a word
Of reproach to you
When you fled.
Because fate had it so,
O son of a charioteer,
You did succeed

12 In uncharioting
The brave Pāṇḍava Bhīma.
Son of Rādhā,
By insulting Bhīma
You did what's expected
Of your family.

Transcreated by P. Lāl 8

20 Hṛṣikeśa-Krishna!
O Divine One O Deva

अनादिनिधनम् देवं
लोककर्तारमव्ययम् ।
ये भक्तास्त्वां हृषीकेश
दुर्गाणि अतितरन्ति ते ॥

e ~
ita

All obstacles.

21 Param Purāṇam
Puruṣam Purāṇam
Paramam
O Ancient Puruṣa
O Supreme Puruṣa
O Supreme Goal ~
Whoever shelters
In the Supreme Goal
Attains
The Supreme Prosperity
The Supreme Felicity.

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

7

आचार्य मा

19 Karṇa replied:

"Do not blame the ācārya. विगर्हस्व

That twice-born Brahmin,

Heedless of his life,

Is fighting for you

With all his śakti and prowess.

20 If white-horsed Arjuna Śvetavāhana,

Was able to slip through

Our defences,

How can even the slightest blame

For that

Attach to the ācārya?

21 Accomplished कृती दक्षो

Skilful युवा शूर:

Young कृतास्त्रो

Brave

Alert and agile लघुविक्रम:

Celestial-weapons-armed दिव्यास्त्रयुक्तम्

Riding

His ape-bannered chariot आस्थाय

रथं वानरलक्षणम्

Transcreated by P. Lāl

32

94 It is not right न हि पुत्रेण हैडिम्बे
For a son
To fight his father, पिता न्याय्यः
O son of Hiḍimbā. प्रबाधितुम्
O son of Hiḍimbā!
I do not nurse कामं खलु न रोषो
The least grudge for you. मे हैडिम्बे
95 But keep in mind
That in a fit of anger विद्यते त्वयि
A man is capable
Of harming even himself."
Hearing these words
(Sañjaya continued)
Bhīma's son, filled with grief
Over his son's death,
96 His eyes, copper-red
With wrath, said
To Aśvatthāman:
"Son of Droṇa! Do you think
I am one of those cowards

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa

39

62 These warriors
Versed in war-weapons
Brimming-with-strength
Desirous-of-heaven
Learned-in-dharma
Brilliant-in-battle
Can rout and kill
Even the gods.

शूराश्च हि कृतास्त्राश्च
बलिनः स्वर्गलिप्सवः।
धर्मज्ञा युद्धकुशला
हन्युर्युद्धे सुरानपि॥

63 They will stand firm
In full armour
On the battlefield
To kill the Pāṇḍavas
And bring victory
To the Kaurava king.

64 It is my belief
That even the strongest
Win because of fate.
How else can you explain
Mahā-powerful Bhīṣma
Supine now on his arrow-bed?

दैवायत्तमहं
मन्ये जयं
सुबलिनामपि

Transcreated by P. Lāl 4

8 O Bharata!<br>
The Pāṇḍavas are powerful<br>
And completely dedicated आत्मर्थ<br>
To their cause.<br>
What can prevent them समर्था:<br>
From destroying your army?

9 O Kaurava rājā!<br>
You are greedy लुब्ध<br>
(Deceitful तमो<br>
(Distrustful निकृतिज्ञ<br>
Haughty.<br>
You suspect even us. सर्वाभिशङ्की।

10 Rājā! I think मानी<br>
You are mean, कुत्सितो।<br>
Ill-ātmaned, inhuman. पापात्मा<br>
Naturally you suspect others. पापपुरुष

11 Yet, O Kuru scion,<br>
I'm staking my life<br>
And going to battle<br>
For your sake.

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa 25

35 O Bhārata!
From one direction
The Pāṇḍava army,
From another direction
The Kaurava army
Advanced ~ and clashed
In a gory
And cacophonous battle.

36 That horrendous
And fearful clash ~
None of us now
Had seen or heard
Anything like it ~
Not now, not earlier.

रौद्रं भयानकं
युद्धं
नैवास्माभिस्तथा
पूर्वं दृष्टपूर्वं
तथाविधम्

SECTION 165

O lord of the earth! (said Sañjaya) विशाम्पते
While that all-creature-killing
Clash in the night continued,
(Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira

55 Bisecting the sky सीमन्तामिव कुर्वन्तीं
forehead, Like the parting नभसोऽग्निप्रभाम्
In a girl's tresses,
The śakti-spear sped, अप्राप्तमेव तां शक्तिं
But the Kaurava Duryodhana त्रिधा विच्छेद
Splintered it mid-flight कौरव
Into three fragments.
56 The three worlds witnessed
And the mahā-atmaned hero
Bhīma witnessed
The magnificent feat. महाप्रभाम्
Mahārāja!
Bhīma brandished
His mahā-powerful mace,
57 Whirled it
And hurled it
At Duryodhana's chariot.
Instantaneously
That swift-speeding mace
Crushed your son's

Transcreated by P. Lāl                                   38

64

जहि कृष्णौ
महाबाहो धर्मराजं
च मातुल ।
नकुलं सहदेवं च
भीमसेनं तथैव च ॥

O *mātula*!
My mahā-muscled
Maternal uncle!
Kill Krishna-and-Arjuna
Kill Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira
Nakula-and-Sahadeva
And Bhīmasena.

65

O *mātula*!
The hopes of the gods
Rest in Devendra-Indra
The king of the gods.
My hopes rest in you.
Kill the sons of Kuntī
Like Agni's son Pāvaki-Skanda
Killing the anti-gods."

66

O radiant one! विभो
Ordered by your son Duryodhana,
Subala's son Śakuni marched
At the head of a huge army
To fight Pṛthā-Kuntī's sons.

Transcreated by P. Lāl



32 O protector of the earth!
Strewn with chopped-off arms
Resembling elephant trunks,
The battlefield
पञ्चास्यैरिव पन्नगैः Looked like a land-mass
Filled with five-headed snakes.

33 (Diadem-decked heads
With handsome noses
And glittering ear-rings...
Angrily biting their lips...
Vacant-staring eyes...

34 Sporting neck-chains
And cūḍāmaṇi head-gems...
Mouths that once
Spoke sweet words...
These Kṣatriya heads
Lay scattered on the field
Making it look as lovely
As a stretch of land
Carpeted with lotus flowers.

Neelambium Speciosum (whose flower closes in the evening)

पङ्कज

Transcreated by P. Lāl

22

19 A bowstring
One arm's-length wide
And fourteen aratni-
Elbow-to-finger-tips long,
He shot arrows the size
Of a chariot's
Akṣa-axle, shrouding
All the directions,
20 As he raced towards Karṇa
On that night of doom
Of so many heroes.
As he stood upright
In his chariot
And pulled his bowstring,
21 The twang reverberated
Like the roar
Of a thunderbolt.
O Bhārata!
Terrified by the noise,
Your warriors

SECTION 178

1 O rājā!
(continued Sañjaya)
Seeing Bhīma pinned down
On the battlefield
By the rākṣasas,
Vāsudeva-Krishna
Said to Ghaṭotkaca:

2 "O mahā-valiant one!
Mahā-muscled hero!
Look!
Before your very eyes
The rākṣasas have trapped
Bhīma.

पश्य भीमं महाबाहो
रक्षसा ग्रस्तमाहवे ।
पश्यतां सर्वसैन्यनाम्
तव चैव महाद्युते ॥

3 O mahā-muscled one!
Leave Karṇa for now.
Kill the Indra-among-rākṣasas
Alāyudha first. And quickly!
Then kill Karṇa

स कर्णं त्वं
समुत्सृज्य

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa 39

24 Respectful-to-Brahmins ब्रह्मण्यः सत्यवादी
Truth-speaking च तपस्वी नियतव्रतः।
Tapasyā-practising रिपुष्वपि दयावांश्च
Strict-vowed
Merciful-to-foes तस्मात् कर्णो वृषः स्मृतः।
Karṇa
Is also called Vṛṣa
'The Virtuous One'.

25 Brilliant-in-battle
Mahā-muscular
Ever-ready-with-his-bow
Forest-lion-like
Leader-elephant-who-tames-
Other-herd-elephants

26 Karṇa is the one
Who humbles the pride
Of lion-like chariot-heroes
Karṇa is like the fierce
Sun at high noon
Blindingly dazzling.

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa 21

25 O Sūta's son Karṇa! तस्मात् पर्णानि
Forget the leaves शाखाश्च स्कन्धं
Forget the branches चोत्सृज्य सूतज
Forget the trunk.
Everywhere and always
Keep the root of the Pāṇḍavas
In mind.
"Krishna is the root." कृष्णं हि विद्धि मूलम्

26 O rājā!
Had Karṇa killed
The scion of the Yādavas
Dāśārha-Krishna,
The entire earth
Would have been his.
This goes without saying.

27 If the Yādava-delighter
Mahātma Krishna had been killed,
Then, O Indra-among-men,
This mountain-sea-and-forest-teeming
Earth would have been all yours.

Transcreated by P. Lāl

24

22 Your son Duryodhana,
O rājā,
And he said to Droṇa:
"I and Duḥśāsana
And Karṇa as well as
Our maternal uncle Śakuni
23 Will divide our army
Into two formations
And kill Arjuna today.
You can stand still
And watch, O mahā-
Muscled Droṇa, since
Your pupil is so dear
To you." Bharadvāja's son
Droṇa smiled and said
24 Encouragingly: "*Svasti*!
May you prosper!
Then, he turned
And said again
To rājā Duryodhana:

तिष्ठ स त्वं महाबाहो
नित्य शिष्य: →
प्रिस्तव
(only in Southern recension)

50 Next came the clash
Between Duryodhana
And Mādrī's son Nakula,
Both boiling with wrath
And revenge.

51 Keeping your son
Duryodhana on his right,
Mādrī's son Nakula
Delightedly pinned him down
With hundreds of arrows.
Mahā-applause
And noisy chaos followed.

52 Forced to the right
By his cousin-brother,
Your son Duryodhana
Was furious with anger
At being out-manoeuvred
To a disadvantage,
But continued
To fight back.

66 O Bhārata!
In the meantime,
Droṇa launched
His own offensive
Against the Pāñcālas
Led by Dhṛṣṭadyumna.
On the fifth day,
Warriors on both sides
Indulged in indiscriminate
Mutual slaughter.

## SECTION 190

1 This was the clash
(continued Sañjaya)
In which Droṇa angrily
Devastated the Pāñcālas
Like Śakra-Indra
In the distant past
Routing the Dānavas.

# The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa
Transcreated from the Sanskrit by P. Lal

## The Droṇa-vadha-parva in the Droṇa Parva

## Volume 187

### SECTION 191

1 Seeing Droṇa despairing
And grief-stricken,
The Pāñcāla-rājā's son
Dhṛṣṭadyumna (said Sañjaya)
Launched a fresh offensive.

2 Dhṛṣṭadyumna
Was the gift of the gods
Obtained by Rājā Drupada
At a mahā-sacrifice
Conducted to obtain a son
Who would kill Droṇa.

21 To clear the debt
I owe my father
Who is now
In the other world.
Granted
that a noble person
never indulges
in his own praise ~

22 But unable
to tolerate
my father's slaughter,
I praise myself.
Today the Pāṇḍavas
and Janārdana-Krishna
will witness
the extent of my prowess.

23 I will wipe out the armies today
Like the cosmos crushed at yuga-end.
Neither gods nor Gandharvas
Neither anti-gods nor rākṣasas

Transcreated by P. Lāl



38

I have heard,
Arjuna,
That not to kill
An enemy
Is adharma.
After all,
Is it not
A Kṣatriya's dharma
To kill
Or be killed
On the battlefield?

39

Son of Pāṇḍu!
(Droṇa
Was my enemy.
It was my dharma
To kill him.
As it was your duty
To kill your father's
Sakhā-friend,
Brave Bhagadatta.

स शत्रुर्निहत:
संख्ये मया
धर्मेण पाण्डव।
यथा त्वया हत:
शूरो भगदत्त:
पितु: सखा ॥

Transcreated by P. Lāl

34

38

I have heard,
Arjuna,
That not to kill
An enemy
Is adharma.
After all,
Is it not
A Kṣatriya's dharma
To kill
Or be killed
On the battlefield?

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Son of Pāṇḍu!
Droṇa
Was my enemy.
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स शत्रुर्निहत:
संख्ये मया
धर्मेण पाण्डव।
यथा त्वया हत:
शूरो भगदत्त:
पितु: सखा ॥

62 Variously wounded
By the miscellaneous arrows
Of Yuyudhāna-Sātyaki,
The brilliant bowman
Son of Droṇa ~
Aśvatthāman ~
Though grievously wounded,
Smiled and said:

63 "Śini's grandson!
I know you have
A soft corner
For that ācārya-murderer
Dhṛṣṭadyumna;
But I have him
In my clutches ~ and you too ~
❀ save him.
ant! I swear
y tapasyā ~ ❀
peace until
he Pāñcālas.

जानामि आचार्य-घातिनि

शापेऽऽत्मनाहं शैनेय
सत्येन तपसा तथा ।
अहत्वा सर्वपाञ्चालान्
यदि शान्तिमहं लभे ॥

Transcreated by P. Lāl 38

81 "Son of Droṇa!"
continued Vyāsa,
"Nīla-Kaṇṭha Śiva,
The blue-throated Divinity,
The Divinity with
The ineffable ātman,
The trident-wielding Divinity
The Divinity
Extolled by ṛṣis,
Granted boon-deserving
Nārāyaṇa the desired boons.

82 Bhagavān Śiva said:
'Nārāyaṇa!

मत्प्रसादान्
मनुष्येषु
देवगन्धर्वयोनिषु
अप्रमेयबलात्मा
त्वम् नारायण
भविष्यसि

Through my grace
The strength of your ātman
Will surpass
Any being born in the wombs
Of humans
Gods
And Gandharvas.

The Mahābhārata of Vyāsa 47

124 Firm
In brahmacarya
Complete self-control
Is his linga
His phallus
Always erect.
Because he is
The mahā-ascetic,
He is called
Maheśvara
The Mahā-divinity.

लिङ्गमस्य यथा
स्थितम्
महद्यत्येव

125 Rsis
Gods
Gandharvas
Apsarās
Worship
The linga
Which is
Always
Erect.

ऊर्ध्वं समास्थितम्

# CORRECTIONS

I am grateful to Pradip Bhattacharya for the following corrections.

## VOLUME IV : THE VIRĀTA PARVA

Sir,

p. 170, sloka 6 you translate "karnam vaikartanam" as "Surya's son Karna". But Uttara and no one actually knows this parentage of Karna till the end of the Udyoga parva. Should it not just be "Karna vaikartana", i.e., who has sliced off his body-armour? In the Adi Parva, the fight between Arjuna and Karna in the svayamvara, on p.987 sloka 10 section 192, you translated "Vaikartana" as "Vikartana's son Karna". Even that indicates an interpolation since this meaning would be something only a poet familiar with what is revealed later can give to "Vaikartana"; the flaying, too, occurs later – so either sense is an interpolation, but as with sloka 7 on p. 191 of Virata Parva is by a poet who knew the whole story (in the later case, Arjuna has carried Gandiva for 65 years till he discarded it on the mahaprasthana).

– *Pradip Bhattacharya.*

[P. Lal's reply: "Surya's son" and "Vikartana's son" are mistranslations for "vaikartana" which means "flesh-sliced".]

### ERRATA

p.21, sl.28: Sudeshna has not yet given Sairandhri shelter, hence the translation needs amendment:

"Like a person climbing a tree
for a suicidal leap
would I be to let you stay
In my palace."

p.89, sl.10: "vane jātātirhāyaṇī", hence "a three-year old forest-born cow".

p.103, sl.10: "mahiśīpānduputrāṇāṁduhitā drupadasya ca" hence: I am queen of Pandu's sons, Drupada's daughter" not "Mother of the sons of Pandu" which would refer to Kunti.

p.189, sl.7: "wings as large as those of vultures" should be "fledged with vulture feathers" (cf. p. 266, sl. 44).

p. 11, sl.11: "shilipriśṭah shilimukhah" = "frog-embossed on back and hilt" not "beeheaded and bee-symbolled."
p.195, sl.22: "of great purity" is not found in the original
p.222, sl.19: "Asvatthaman" not "Asvatthanam".
p.225, sl.14: "Southern" not "shouthern".
p.226, sl.21: "I am dreadful-deed-doer Bibhatsu" refers back to p.195, sl. 18 "I am Bibhatsu the Loathsome One", but does it not always signify the opposite, "He who commits no loathsome deed" just as "Duhshasana" by inversion signifies, "He whose rule is difficult to bear", not "He who it is difficult to discipline"?
[P. Lal's comment: "There is no grammatical sanction in Sanskrit for such 'reverse' opposite meaning."]
p.228, sl.11: "supermanly" instead of "supremanly"
p.236, sl. 26: "The" instead of "They"
p.262, sl.9: "you" instead of "your"
p.282, sl.12: "the words of Uttarā" not "Uttara"
p.282, sl.13: "niry Ahi madhyaditi matsyaputra muvāca yāvat kuruvo visajnyāh" i.e. "Exit through their centre (or, "from amongst them"), son of Matsya, while the Kauravas are unconscious"; not "Escape from the field" which connotes an act of fleeing that contradicts Arjuna's character.
p.284, sl.25: "muhūrtaṁ" is not "for a while" but "for a moment/ instant". Consider: "Pausing, silently, for an instant".
p. 288, sl.24, 3rd line: "to the sami tree" instead of "to be sami tree".
p. 291, sl. 21, 1st line: "has" instead of "hsa".
p.305, sl.18: "prabhā mūrtimatīva gaurī, nīlotpalābhā suradevateva krisṇā shitā mūrtimatīva lakshmīh" "radiant, looking like Gauri, glowing blue-lotus-like, Krisṇā is virtually Lakshmi of the gods."
p.305, sl.19, 3rd line: "panegyric" not "panegyrio".
p.307, sl. 31, 1st line: "He respectfully" not "He respect fully".
p.310, sl. 24, 2nd line: "rathānāmayutaṁ" is not "ten thousand chariots" but "ayuta" followed by "niyūta" infantry.
In the family tree, "pre-marriage union with Ganga" is incorrect, since Shantanu married Ganga and made her his queen and lived with her in the royal palace. It should read "Marries Ganga" and their son is named "Devavrata" who later acquires the appellative "Bhishma" because of the vow he takes to obtain Satyavati for his father.

## VOLUME V : THE UDYOGA PARVA

p.32, sl.23, "after" not "alter"
p.51, sl.6, "our" not "out"
p.60, sl.6, "smiling" not "smilling"
p.63, sl.10, "it" not "is"
p.66, sl.33, "lustrous" not "bustrous"
p.68, sl.14, "horrendous" not "horrenduos"
p.76 sl.25, "Salya" *not* "Salys"
p.95 sl.21, "bowstring" not "bowtring"
p.96 sl.27: "and the twins guarded Bhima" not "and Bhima protected the rear of the twins".
p.121 sl.55: "tigers" (vyaghra) not "lions". Compare P.194, sl.64 where "lions" correctly translates "simha".
p.123, sl.12, "commerce" not "commence"
p.147, sl.74, "house" not "houst"
p.160, sl.43, "plans" not "plants"
p.180, 181 should have 36 not 38 as the chapter number at top left.
p.180, sl.48, "despair" not "desapir"
p.182, sl.57, "futile" not "fuitile"
p.202, sl.9, "where" not "whre"
p.210, sl. 77: "women age from lack of intercourse": asambhhogo jara strinam, *not* "to intercoursing women, pleasureless orgasm".
p.225, sl.1, "mauna" not "manua"
p.229, sl.27, "renunciations" not "renunciation"
p.232, sl.54, "outside" not "cutside"
p.236, sl.15, "brahmacarya's" not "brahmacarys"
p.241, sl.9, "they" not "the"
p.262, sl.76, "Pandya" not "Pandava"
p.264, sl.87, "No" not "Now"
p.283, sl.33, "wolf" not woelf"
p.325, sl.9, "struck" not "strack"
p.326, sl.15, "his" not "hiw"
p.345 sl.5 "the arishta bird" should be "arishtanemi garuda".
p.345 sl.5, line 6, "of" not "is"
p.347, sl.7, "Sātvata" not "Satvata"
p.351, sl.52, "adharma" not "adhura"
p.359, sl.19, line 4 "of Bhisma" not "to Bhisma"
p.359 sl.19 last line: "repeatedly in front of Bhishma, Drona and others" *not* "in front to Bhishma".
p.365 sl.1 line 1: "Keshava prahasanniva" i.e. "Keshava laughed", *not* "was pleased".

p.375 sl.8, line 1, "charioteer's" not "charioteern's"
p.387 sl.21 line 1: "Shauri" not "Krishna".
p.387 sl.22 line 1: "to board the chariot" *not* "inside the chariot".
p.406, sl.6, "To" not "The"
p.408 sl.19 not translated. Last 2 lines are a copy of last 2 lines of sl. 18 and the 1st line has not been translated: "Then Dhritarashtra's priests greeted Janardana as was proper with offerings of cow, honey-curds and water."
p.413, sl.44, "she" not "the"
p.454, sl.17, line 3, "failed" not "fatled"
p.455, sl.10, line 4, sl.11, line 1, "Varuna" not "Varun a"
p.496, sl.4, "Kubera" not "kuhera"
p.505, sl.13, "Yataparvā" not "Yataparva"
p.539, sl.22, "Duryodhana" not "Duryodhara"
p.547, sl.41, "Bahlika" not "Bahtika"
p.550, sl.18, "Kāla" not "Kala"
p.583, sl.17, "hurt" not "hurte"
p.595, sl.13, line 3: "my activities" *not* "by activities".
p.599, sl.47, lines 1, 2: "son...drinks" not "sons...drink"
p.613, sl.11, "dais" not "dias"
p.626, sl.36, "son" not "you"
p.652, sl.22, line 2, "elephant" not "elephants"
p.652, sl.22, line 3, "horse" not "horses"
p.654, sl.7, line 3 re-arrange: "and the dharma-knowing Kshatriyas, Pitamaha,/told them the truth."
p.656, sl.28, "crimsoned" not "cirmsoned"
p.658, sl.11 last line: "Dhrishtaketu" *not* "Sahadeva" which occurs in sl. 12, line 2.
p.677, sl. 84, "humiliated" not "himiliated"
p.706, sl. 25, "grips" not "girips"
p.720, sl.12, "shooting" not "shoting"
p.724 sl. 9 1st line: delete "Sisupala", not in original and is out of context being long dead; replace by "Dhrishtaketu" from line 2.
p.724. sl.10 line 1: "devoted to kshatriya dharma, sacker of hostile cities, Kshatradeva"
p.725 sl.10 line 3: delete "and Kshatradeva"
p.770, sl.6, line 1: "I" not "In"
p.816, sl. 10 "Brihadbala" not "Brihadratha"
p.818, sl.3, "Uttamaujas" not "Uttamraujas"

DROṆA PARVA (Volume 7)
Section 202, Sloka 43, Vaiśravaṇa-Kubera

# INTERLUDE-IN-INCOGNITO and THE GATHERING STORM

Pradip Bhattacharya

*The Complete Virata and Udyoga Parvas* of the Mahabharata: transcreated from Sanskrit by Padma Shri Professor P. Lal, WRITERS WORKSHOP, Kolkata, pp.407 and 962. Hardback Rs.400 and 1000, flexiback Rs.300 and 600 with 80 and 130 pages respectively of facsimile reproductions showing the extensive revisions and additions; special limited edition, numbered and signed, with original hand-painted *paṭa-chitra* Rs.800 and 1500.

Change of scenario, shifting of the spotlight from one protagonist to another, a sudden speeding up of pace– all these come to the fore in Vyasa's narrative art in the *Virata* and *Udyoga Parvas*, the fourth and fifth books of the *Mahabharata.* In the *Sambhava* sub-parva of the first book, Arjuna took over centre stage from Bhima-the-rescuer till the focus shifted to Yudhishthira in the shattering climax of the gambling match. In the forest exile, the prime attention swayed between Bhima and Arjuna with the eldest brother and Draupadi anchoring the centre. When we come to the incognito phase, the spotlight stays on Bhima, turning only at the end to highlight the grotesque figure of Brihannala laying low Duryodhana's forces.

It has become fashionable, since van Buitenen's translation and Peter Brook's dramatisation, to label the fourth book of the Mahabharata as Vyasa's *udyoga* at burlesque – all because the brothers and their wife assume low class disguises followed by a theatrical victory over enemy forces. On study, however, patterns emerge that continue and reiterate themes articulated in the earlier books. There is much anguish, considerable trauma and little of fun-and-games (Kichaka caressing Bhima disguised as a woman; Brihannala, skirts flapping and braid flying, chasing the fleeing Uttara– but in both cases the momentary hilarity is transformed into brutal blood-letting). In this fourth book, Vyasa looks before and after; there are interesting parallels and contrasts.

The attack by the forces of Hastinapura, with which the fourth

book of the epic climaxes, is a reiteration of a see-saw conflict over succession between the cousins – one set whose parentage is unquestioned and the other who suffer from dubious fatherhood– that began with the mountain-dwelling Pandavas finding a royal home but having to escape the flaming house-of-lac and live disguised as wandering Brahmins, as they have to again years later. Their fortunes turned with Arjuna first obtaining a gift of wondrous hoses from a Gandharva and then winning Draupadi. A skirmish followed with the frustrated princely suitors, prefiguring Kurukshetra, that was beaten back by Bhima (who threw Shalya down) and Arjuna (from whom the awed Karna withdrew) and was dissipated by Krishna who, in his very first appearance, commanded immediate compliance. The glory of Indraprastha and the royal Rajasuya sacrifice crowned the restoration through the removal of two major obstacles – Jarasandha and Shishupala– and the creation of the fateful Maya-*sabha* that fed Duryodhana's envy afresh leading directly to the gambling hall.

A second reversal of fortunes occurred in two stages: Arjuna enjoying a long self-imposed exile in which Krishna plays a major role at the end; and the gambling away of Indraprastha twice over, with Krishna absent (in the *Vana Parva* he says that had he been present none of this would have occurred). These and the outraging of Draupadi's modesty sowed the seeds of inevitable fratricide.

The next reversal occurred in the forest, with the advantage going to the Pandavas in rescuing Duryodhana from the Gandharvas while Karna fled the scene, as he does again in the *Virata Parva.* Krishna had no role. In this incident Vyasa replicates a Vedic motif absent in Valmiki – cattle as prime wealth– repeating it again in the *Virata Parva* with Duryodhana who assumes the role of the Panis vis-a-vis the Indra-Pandavas.

There is a graded shift from encounters with demonic beings in the forest starting with Hidimb the cannibal, then the terrifying Kirmira, both strongly reminiscent of Valmiki's Rakshasas, followed by Draupadi – the "Shri" (good fortune) of the Pandavas –being abducted first by Jatasura disguised Ravana-like as a Brahmin, and again by the human Jayadratha. The Pandavas win her back, with even Yudhishthira fighting for the first time in the second event. In Kurukshetra, Jayadratha, released magnanimously by Yudhishthira, will defeat all of them and cause Abhimanyu's death. Krishna continues to be off-scene. The mysterious mythic worlds of the forest – where lakes bloom with

supernal blossoms guarded by demons; where an ape and a python can immobilize invincible Bhima – now give way to the rough-and-tumble of urban life in Virata's city.

In Virata's court they assume the disguises of a Brahmin gambler, a cook-cum-wrestler, a dance-and-music tutor with "a long reed", a groom, a cowherd, and a chambermaid, which Dumezil tried hard to fit into his tri-functional Indo-European paradigm. Arjuna's eunuch-hood and its verification by young women inversely parallels that of Shikhandi, while his sex-reversal parallels the Yaksha Sthunakarna's. Draupadi's modesty is outraged for the fourth time and she is even kicked in the court, with two of her husbands and the king remaining silent – a parallel of the Hastinapura scene. As this occurs during the Brahma festival, van Buitenen equates this with Saturnalia and Holi, which socially sanction the licentiousness that he finds inspiring the *parva.* Draupadi succeeds in getting Kichaka killed, but is abducted yet again to be burnt alive with his corpse. She calls out the secret names of the Pandavas, all of which are linked to the "Jaya" that is a synonym for Vyasa's composition. Of these only "Vijaya" is a real name, being Arjuna's, who does not respond. It is Bhima who, once more, saves Draupadi. Now Duryodhana launches a full-scale attack featuring all the heroes who later figure in Kurukshetra. The entire lot is knocked unconscious, except Bhishma, by Brihannala (presaging Shikhandi in the Great War). Krishna is absent. Indeed, the disguised Arjuna is to the terrified and demoralised Bhuminjaya-Uttara what *sakha* Krishna becomes for him in *dharmakshetre-kurukshetre*, even to the extent of the significances of the many names/*vibhutis* of Arjuna/Krishna and the words in which Uttara begs pardon for having addressed Brihannala lightly. To believe that without Krishna the Pandavas are nothing is to reveal an extremely superficial reading of Vyasa's complicated epic narrative.

A remarkable feature of this book, brought out in the transcreator's insightful preface, is the breathtaking speed at which the narration proceeds. Professor Lal's effort to provide an English approximation of Sauti's recitation is most satisfying. After the slow-moving, elaborate descriptions of forest life and holy pilgrimages in the preceding book, the complete change of scenario to the cut-and-thrust of court life is so well transcreated that the orality of the epic comes through forcefully. Vividly we listen to different voices speaking, the exchanges between apprehensive

Sudeshna and pleading Sairandhri, the gossiping maids and humiliated Draupadi, lustful Kichaka and desperate Panchali, boastful Uttara and flustered Brihannala, sobbing Draupadi, unmoved Kanka, timid Virata and furious Ballava, the giggling girls and pig-tailed Brihannala. In contrast, the *Udyoga Parva* presents a "heady mix of sincerity and duplicity", with the spoken word holding us in thrall. "Nowhere", writes Professor Lal, "(is it) more charming and cunning, more straight and double-edged, more selfish and altruistic...A wonderful exercise in public relations and double-speak." In this "Vyasan U.N. of sorts" each speaker is a mouthpiece, exploiting language to the maximum for pushing a case, irrespective of his personal beliefs, both sides bent on war. Such posturing can only result in the Ragnarok of Kurukshetra. As the fulminations die down, Vyasa introduces a wondrous vignette: Krishna-Karna-Kunti face-to-face, leaving it to us, Professor Lal points out, to figure out where the moral rectitude lies. Is Karna right or Kunti; is Kunti the "real" mother or Radha; is Krishna right in tempting Karna with Draupadi? Buddhadeb Bose, in *Pratham Partha*, added another layer to the scenario by making Draupadi approach Karna in person.

Some issues need to be raised: why does the transcreator begin with an invocation saluting Vyasa that is not in the *Mahabharata*? The original runs: "Bowing to Narayana, and Nara, the best of men, and to the goddess Saraswati, utter *Jaya*." A baffling incident in the *Virata Parva* is Brihannala assuring Uttara that he will not be defiled by climbing up the Sami tree to bring down the weapons because "There is no corpse on this tree" (41.4) although one specifically described as "foul smelling" was tied there by the Pandavas. Incidentally, this is the only place (section 43) where the bows, arrows and swords of the Pandavas are described lovingly in detail. Uttara's description of a "bee-headed and bee-symbolled" sword (42.11 & 20) is a mistranslation of "shili prishtha shili mukha" which connotes "frog". The translation of "Bibhatsu" as "the Loathsome One" (44.18) is also questionable, "horrific deed-doer" or "the Horrifier" being more appropriate. Curiously, Arjuna explains it as the opposite, "one who never commits any loathsome deed", just as "Janardana" means "grinder of the people" but signifies the opposite for Krishna. The transcreation of 53.21 contradicts this as it reverses Arjuna's explanation by having him announce to the Kaurava host, "I am dreadful-deed-doer Bibhatsu" (53.21). It is difficult to make out the meaning he gives of being

named "Krishna". According to Lal and Ganguli, Pandu gave it out of affection, as he was "the dark boy of great purity". Van Buitenen translates, "out of love for that little boy of the dazzling complexion" which provides an interesting link with his soul-mate, Krishna. In 66.13, victorious Arjuna can hardly ask Uttara, "Escape from the field!" The correct translation is "go out through the middle while they are unconscious", collecting their upper garments, which avenges the Pandavas' loss of their *uttariyas* in the gambling hall. When the Hastinapura army departs, Arjuna does not stand "still silently" (66.25). Rather, he follows them momentarily to pay his respects silently (the mode is described in the next two verses). In introducing Draupadi to his father, Uttara does not refer to her as "golden-skinned beauty" (71.18), but as "kanakottamangi... nilotpalabha", "bedecked with gold ornaments...blue-lotus complexioned".

In the *Udyoga Parva*, on page 408, verse 19 of section 89 has not been translated. Instead, the last two lines repeat the preceding verse. This should run: "Then Dhritarashtra's priests greeted Janardana as was proper with offerings of cow, honey-curds and water." On page 724 verse 9 of section 171, the reference is not to Shishupala, who is long dead, but to Dhrishtaketu. The puzzle of why the sons of Draupadi are not considered for Uttara is answered in the *Udyoga Parva* where Draupadi speaks of her five sons led by Abhimanyu avenging her. This means they were all born later, which casts an interesting sidelight on what did not happen in Indraprastha during Arjuna's exile. But Vidura's prescription that cooked food, salt, honey, milk, curd, ghee, oil, meat, sesame seeds, roots, fruits, red cloth, molasses and perfumes should not be sold is puzzling and unglossed.

Before the incognito exile begins, the priest Dhaumya's advice on how to behave with kings depicts the ruler as a self-willed tyrant – precisely the converse of the *dharma-raja* and giving us some idea about the Kshatriyas whom Parashurama destroyed and who are infesting the land once again. It is at the beginning of this book that, for the first time, we find a description of what the ominous dice looked like. Yudhishthira carries golden dice set with sapphires instead of the traditional *vibhitaka* nuts. Professor Lal's transcreation (red and black dice and ivory, blue, yellow, red and white pawns) is more correct than van Buitenen's dice made of beryl, gold, ivory, phosphorescent nuts and black and red dice. The disguise he chooses is that of a royal *sabhastarah*, one who spreads the rug for

dicing, for which Lal's "courtier" is hardly adequate. Yudhishthira's invocation to Durga for protecting them – hailing her first as Yashoda and Nandagopa's daughter – is clearly a late interpolation coterminous with the Shakta puranas, as is the later prayer to her by Arjuna in the *Bhishma Parva.* Curiously, Virata's capital remains nameless (surmised to be Bairat near Jaipur) and the only place-name we have in his kingdom is Upaplavya where the action of the *Udyoga Parva* is located. Bhima undertakes to wrestle but not to kill any challenger, yet that is precisely what he does with Jimuta in the Brahma festival that becomes the occasion for Kichaka's assault on Draupadi whose appearance is described more often in this book than anywhere else by Yudhishthira, Sudeshna and Kichaka. When the attack by the Trigartas is beaten back and Bhima drags Susharma to Yudhishthira addressing him as their slave– as he had done with Jayadratha– the eldest Pandava repeats the mistake by releasing him with foolish magnanimity. Jayadratha and Susharma become the causes of Abhimanyu's death, one by preventing help from reaching him; the other by keeping Arjuna fully engaged elsewhere.

A hitherto unknown aspect of Draupadi comes to the fore in this book – her ability to use her sexual appeal to get her way. She approaches not Arjuna, knowing his total subservience to Yudhishthira, but the emotional Bhima who has not given a second thought to risking his life on several occasions in the forest to please her fancy. How succinctly yet memorably Vyasa paints the scene: "The room was ablaze with her beauty/and mahatma Bhima's splendour." Her seduction of Bhima is an elaborate affair spanning over 200 verses spread over five sections beginning with twining herself around him as he sleeps. The images Vyasa uses are all from the wild, evocative of primal passion: mating forest-born heifer and bull, female and male cranes, lioness and lion, she-elephant and tusker. Beginning with a plangent lament that plays skilfully on his psychology, she administers the coup-de-grace by holding out to him her hands chapped by grinding ointments for the queen. Simple Bhima's reaction is all that she had hoped for: he covers his face with her hands and weeps in anguish. Bhima's attempt at consoling her by quoting examples of five renowned satis of the past includes a reference to Indrasena-Narayani that is of great interest because it looks back to the account Vyasa gives Drupada of Draupadi's previous birth. Incidentally, Indrasena is also the name of Nala and Damayanti's daughter who married

Mudgala the eldest of five sons of Brhamyashva who founded the Panchalas. A number of manuscripts contain the account of Indrasena-Narayani's remarkable devotion to her husband, the irascible and leprous sage Maudgalya, which led to her being cursed to have five husbands in the next birth. In the *Rig-Veda* (10.102) she is valiant Mudgalani, driving her husband Mudgala's chariot, acting like "Indra's dart" to win back stolen cattle. A passage in one of the manuscripts refers to yet another previous birth of Draupadi that links her to the Matsyas too. As Shaibya, daughter of Bhumashva, she wedded in a svyamvara the five sons of king Nitantu named Salveya, Shurasena, Shrutasena, Tindusara and Atisara who founded five branches of the Matsyas paralleling the five of the Panchalas.

What finally forces Bhima's hand, however, is her threat of committing suicide, saying, "Where will your maha-dharma be then/ O my dharma-seeking husbands?/ You will keep your word,/ but you will lose your wife." It is a tactic she repeats with him at the end of the war for avenging the murder of her brothers and sons by Ashvatthama. We are given an extremely rare glimpse into Arjuna's heart, most sensitively transcreated, when he tells Sairandhri, who reproaches him with enjoying himself in the women's quarters while she suffers:

> "Brihannala has griefs too, terrible ones,
> She is fallen into the womb
> of an animal.
> You will not understand anything of this,
> my good girl…
> No one can look into the deepest places
> of another's heart.
> You don't know me,
> you don't know what I feel."

But nowhere does Draupadi ever recall an attempt at stripping her. Even when Ashvatthama berates Duryodhana he mentions her being dragged in her period in a single cloth into the gaming hall, but nothing more. When Arjuna rebukes Karna, it is only for letting a "wicked rascal" drag Panchali into the *sabha*. In his peace embassy, Krishna accuses the Kauravas of this same dragging by the hair only. Was the attempt to strip added later?

Despite all her fulminations against her eldest husband, the complexity of Draupadi's relationship is instructive indeed. When Virata gives Yudhisthira a nose-bleed–the first ever physical wound

he has suffered–he has only to glance at Sairandhri for her to understand immediately and catch the blood in a vessel so that it does not drop on the ground to cause famine and to hide it from Arjuna's eyes.

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This *parva* provides a rare chronological clue when Brihannala tells Uttara that Arjuna carried the Gandiva for 65 years (43.7), which could be stated only by someone who knew the end of the epic and has to be an interpolation. In the *Udyoga Parva* (52.10) Dhritarashtra says that 33 years ago Arjuna burnt the Khandava forest, which provides another indicator. An information of interest is that a special area was set apart to be ruled by Suta chiefs like Kekaya whose children were Kichaka and Sudeshna. The Suta Karna's conduct vis-à-vis Draupadi is paralleled here by Suta Kichaka whose unrestrained passion conflates Duryodhana and Duhshasana, while his brothers are like the Dhartarashtras. The *Udyoga Parva* presents another parallel in Nahusha's lust for Indrani. Similarly, the laying low of the Kaurava heroes by Brihannala, including the knocking down of Bhishma without his losing consciousness, anticipates Shikhandi's role in the fall of Bhishma. Arjuna defeating a joint attack by six heroes anticipates the similar attack by them on his son. Arjuna's double sex change (man-eunuch-man) parallels the conflation of Shikhandi (woman-man) and Sthunakarna (man-woman). Virata's bewilderment when Arjuna refuses to wed his daughter parallels Drupada's when faced with the opposite demand regarding Draupadi. Arjuna's reaction reveals not just his sensitivity to social mores but also Virata's insensitivity – the exact reverse of the Pandavas' attitude to Panchali's polyandric marriage. Krishna pours Yadava wealth into Pandava coffers thrice over: when they marry Draupadi; when Arjuna marries Subhadra; and at Abhimanyu's marriage. There might be a patron-bard issue involved in shaping the narration since Janamejaya, to whom the epic is being recited, is Abhimanyu's grandson.

Shiva plays a crucial role in these critical events: he grants Drupada the boon of getting a Bhishma-killing son and gives Amba

the boon of killing Bhishma as a man. It is the leader of his hosts, Kubera, whose attendant bestows his manhood upon Shikhandi. Draupadi's five husbands are Shiva's boon, and it is he who curses five Indras to be born as the Pandavas. Shiva blesses Chitravahan's ancestor with one son per generation because of which Chitrangada is brought up like a son (paralleling Shikhandi), whom Arjuna weds and is killed by his son from her. Shiva's grace gives Krishna his son Shamba who becomes the nemesis of the Yadavas.

The peculiar conduct of Bhishma anticipates what he will do in Kurukshetra. He provides Duryodhana with clues to track down the Pandavas and marshals his forces to oppose Arjuna, with no scruples in aiding Duryodhana in rustling cattle! The picture he paints of the kingdom where Yudhishthira resides is a virtual Rama-rajya. The battle with the Trigartas continues into the night as will happen in the *Drona Parva*. Kripa advises that six of them should jointly attack Arjuna, as Drona will do with Abhimanyu. Uttara's vainglorious boasting contains an apocryphal reference to his defeating "Surya's son Karna" (36.6) which is a mistranslation of "Karnam vaikartanam", the reference being to his slicing off his skin-armour which is shown when Arjuna's arrow rips through his coat of mail into his flesh (60.26). The same mistake in translation occurred in the passage describing the skirmish between Karna and Arjuna after Draupadi was won in the *Adi Parva* (192.10) where "Vaikartana" was translated as "Vikartana's son".

In the dice-game, Yudhishthira's response to the assault on Draupadi had been silence. Her independent thinking was never to his liking. Here the gambler Kanka's response to Kichaka's kick contains the notorious verse:

> "A woman is never free.
> As a girl, she is protected by her father;
> as wife, by husband;
> in old age, by her son."

He adds a sly dig at Sairandhri, stating that a devoted wife, whatever her sufferings, "never criticises her husband". What this reveals of his attitude helps us to make sense of his callous explanation at the end of the epic for why Draupadi cannot make it to heaven.

After the Brahma festivities comes the gathering storm. Post-wedding, the Pandavas marshal their allies: Satvata-Vrishnis (Kritavarma and the Bhoja-Andhakas are with Duryodhana), Matsyas, Ushinaras, Chedi, Panchalas, Magadha, Kashi, Kekaya

princes (whose forces are with Duryodhana). The southern Pandya king is an intriguing addition till we find that in southern recensions Chitrangada is the Pandya princess, a detail that van Buitenen misses out and hence finds this inexplicable. The split among the Yadavas is now open as Balarama's sympathies lie with the Dhartarashtras whom he praises and blames Yudhishthira for walking into disaster with open eyes. It becomes quite clear that the Panchalas are the real force behind the anti-Hastinapura alliance, which is why Dhrishtadyumna is designated commander-in-chief. Bhishma's long account of Amba mentions that much before Drupada organised the ritual for obtaining a Drona-killing son, he had propitiated Shiva demanding a son who would kill Bhishma. Duryodhana does not ask Bhishma why and van Buitenen annotates "there is no reason for Drupada to hate Bhishma." The reason is given in the *Harivamsa*, appropriately styled the appendix to the epic. After Shantanu's death, the Panchala usurper Ugrayudha had demanded that Satyavati be handed over to him in exchange for a handsome bride-price. Bhishma slew him; hence the enmity. Van Buitenen presciently notes that the Pandava alliance stretches from Mathura in the north to Magadha in the east, all along the right banks of the Yamuna and the Ganga. The five villages asked for are also located here. The Kauravas range from the northwest to the southeast along the left bank of the Ganga (Gandhara, Kamboja, Sindhu-Sauvira, Shalva, Madra, Trigarta, Pragjyotisha, and Avanti and Mahishmati near the Vindhyas, southwest of the Pandava coalition). They clash at Kurukshetra on the right bank of the Yamuna. Interestingly, the last scion of Rama's dynasty, Brihadbala of Koshala, fights against the Pandavas and dies at the hands of Krishna's nephew.

Besides the geographical conglomeration there is a deeper political impetus that ranges these kingdoms on either side. Sri Aurobindo has pointed out that with the Kauravas are those who refuse to accept Krishna's new concept of a *samrat*, an overlord who will bring disparate lands under a single umbrella of righteous rule. In Indian history it is these areas which always remained recalcitrant to any type of unification, efforts for which were invariably articulated from the lower reaches of the Ganga.

This *parva* provides us a unique scene of Krishna-Arjuna with their wives in the inner apartments (section 59.7) when Sanjaya visits them, where even Abhimanyu and the twins do not enter. A premilinary glimpse of this was given before the burning of the

forest in the first book when they retired with the women for a riverside picnic. Sanjaya finds them reclining, drinking, "Keshava's feet rested in Arjuna's lap/and mahatma's Arjuna's feet/reposed in the laps of Krishnaa/and Satyabhama." Krishna makes a significant comment: he is yet to repay the debt owed to Draupadi for not aiding her in distress. There was, therefore, no miraculous supply of garments in the gaming hall and the attempt to disrobe Draupadi is most likely a subsequent addition.

The gathering storm reveals the Kautilyan side of Yudhishthira once he knows that Duryodhana has beaten him to obtaining the alliance of Shalya (a parallel to Arjuna and Duryodhana vying for Krishna as ally). The dharma-raja asks him to betray Karna and repeats this, after listening to his lengthy account of how Indra regained his throne by perfidy, till he obtains the promise. The story of Nahusha's fall as a python Shalya recounts links up with Bhima's encounter in the *Vana Parva* and with Yayati's fall because of overweening pride in the first book. Quite uncharacteristically we find Yudhishthira telling Krishna that *artha*, wealth, is the basic dharma (72.29), anticipating Arjuna's celebration of this in the *Shanti Parva*.

The message Drupada's priest conveys contains the intriguing assertion that the Pandavas are stronger despite having a smaller army, an unexplained statement that Duryodhana repeats to Bhishma at the beginning of the *Gita*. Dhritarashtra's discourse to Sanjaya tells us that Shishupala had a chariot-duel with Krishna and it was no miraculous decapitation inside the Rajasuya *sabha*. Several manuscripts contain lengthy passages describing this duel at the end of which Krishna uses the *chakra*. Sanjaya's embassy to the Pandavas contains a bitter truth, "neither winning nor losing/ will bring any good…what joy will you get/after you have killed (elders and cousins)" that strikes home at the end of the war when Yudhishthira repeats this realisation and wishes to abdicate. Yudhishthira himself echoes this while urging Krishna's peace-embassy. This speech includes ominous forecasts about many jointly killing one (Abhimanyu), of survivors grouping to wipe out victors (Ashvatthama). He even uses the image of dogs fighting which Arjuna repeats in the *Ashvamedha Parva* when lamenting before Duhshala over the loss of kin. It is supremely ironic that Yudhishthira's reply to Sanjaya repeats his ancestor Yayati's warning, "kama-and-artha/feed upon desires/like fire upon ghee" but directs it at the Kauravas, oblivious of his own admission in

the *Vana Parva* that he had gambled hoping to win Hastinapura. Sanjaya's reply and Krishna's – both here and in response to Yudhishthira's plea to undertake the peace-embassy and in reply to Bhima – state doctrines regarding dharma and karma that anticipate the *Gita.* Krishna also uses the *Anukramanika Parva*'s image of two massive trees for the two sides. Sanjaya's report to Dhritarashtra contains several passages regarding the *atman* that anticipate the *Gita* as does Vidura's advice and the oft-repeated verse,

> "Where dharma, truth, simplicity
> and humility are,
> Govinda-Krishna is.
> And where Krishna is, victory is."

Vidura speaks the famous verse that Krishna repeats in the Hastinapura court:

> "For the family, sacrifice a man;
> for the village, a family;
> for the country, a village;
> for the atman,
> the world"

and warns to curb craving, repeating Yayati's advice from the *Adi Parva.* Sanata-Sujata, like Krishna, declares that the Vedas and sacrifices cannot liberate men, but *jnana,* ascesis and renunciation of attachment can. He also celebrates the thumb-sized, heart-dwelling eternal Purusha.

The *Udyoga* contains fascinating myths that hark back to the *Rig Veda* (Indra treacherously murdering Trishira and Vritra), and the *Adi* (a different version of Vishvamitra's attainment of Brahminhood; Yayati's fall from heaven and his daughter Madhavi's polyandry, the subject of plays by Bhisham Sahni and Girish Karnad and novels by V.S.Khandekar and Chitra Chaturvedi). It creates new myths like that of omnipotent Garuda being foiled in his prey (the theme of Subodh Ghose's brilliant creation, "Sumukha and Gunakeshi") and humbled by the female ascetic Shandili; Amba's sex change (the theme of Chitra Chaturvedi's recent novel); folk-tales like the mice (Kauravas) and the hermit-cat (Yudhishthira). We also come across lost myths, like the reference to Divodasa making love to Madhavi as Narada did to Satyavati, Shukra to Shataparva and Pulastya to Pratichya.

Duryodhana is the only Kaurava clear-sighted enough to realise that it is Krishna who seeks to destroy them and make Yudhishthira

the *samrat.* Krishna, like Rama, has no pretensions to divinity and tells Arjuna plainly that he does all that is humanly possible but cannot alter what destiny (*daiva*) dictates (79.5-6). It is quite a surprise to discover that the only husband of Panchali to urge war is not Bhima, as one would expect, but Sahadeva, the youngest. No wonder Draupadi, feeling let down, says that her old father, brothers and adolescent sons will avenge her. That is when Krishna declares his vow in implacable terms recalling Devavrata's:

"The Himavant hills may move,
the earth shatter
in a hundred pieces, heaven collapse;
my promise stands."

Yet he undertakes the embassy so that none may say that he never tried to stop the world-destroying war. Unfortunately, despite this, that is precisely what Gandhari accuses him of and curses him.

The two Krishna-Kunti meetings expose the anguish behind Pritha's iron façade. She blames her father most of all for her misfortunes, beginning with giving her away in childhood "like money squandered by a rich man", and also holds her father-in-law responsible for her griefs of which the greatest is the insult to Draupadi. The message she conveys through her nephew to her sons is an elaborately structured rhetorical exercise that moves deeply while trumpeting a resounding call to arms. Its highlight is the exhortation of Vidula to her defeated son Sanjaya that Sri Aurobindo translated into English for rousing the martial spirit in Indian youth against foreign domination.

Duryodhana's response to the embassy via Uluka has interesting convoluted logic: he refused to compromise so that the Pandavas would be motivated to wipe their mother's tears with a victory and to prove that they were true Kshatriyas, not mere loud-mouths! He is not in the least impressed with Krishna's cosmic manifestation (for which we have been prepared in the *Vana Parva* by Lomasha's description of Parashurama seeing the cosmos in Rama and Bhima seeing it in Hanuman, as Dr.Vasudev Poddar has pointed out) which he dismisses as magic he himself can replicate. His words even echo the message Kunti sent her sons ("the reason for which a kshatriya lady gives birth to a son is here"). But, in the allies he enumerates he makes a slip by including the Matsyas who are on the other side (160.103). His words fly straight to the mark as he points out that the Pandavas were saved

from slavery not by Bhima's mace and Arjuna's Gandiva but by Parshati-Panchali.

Krishna's embassy contains quite a few surprises. He announces that the Pandavas are willing to have Duryodhana as the crown-prince and his father as the ruler if they get back Indraprastha (124.60). There has been no mention of this in the consultations in Upaplavya. Similarly, he offers Karna overlordship with the added attraction of bedding Draupadi. Her reaction, had she got to know of this, offers rich scope for a creative writer. Most unexpected is Karna's foreknowledge about his own death and the annihilation of the Kauravas. He paints a vivid picture of the war in terms of a ritual sacrifice and narrates a dream that is an exact parallel of Avindhya's portentous dream in the Rama-katha (*Vana Parva*) of Lakshmana seated on a heap of bones, gulping boiled milk-and-honey rice. Buddhadeb Bose's play, *The First Partha* is a gripping recreation of the Karna-Krishna-Draupadi and Karna-Kunti encounters with fascinating innovations offering new insights going well beyond Tagore and Vyasa. As the book ends, the Kaurava ranks split wide open. Bhishma succeeds in exploiting Karna's hubris so that his pride overcomes his concern for Duryodhana and he opts out of the war, warning that the army's morale is being sapped by Bhishma who ought to be dismissed.

This fifth book is unique because of two possible historical references. Vidura's warning about an angry Brahmin destroying a kingdom could be a reference to Chanakya and the Nandas and dates the final text of the epic as post-Mauryan, tallying with Hiltebeitel's thesis. There is also a great chariot-hero Paurava named by Drupada with the kings of northwestern India recommending him as an ally, whom Arjuna defeated along with the Kashmir chieftains in the *Sabha Parva*. Paurava becomes Duryodhana's ally and there is no record of his death in Kurukshetra. Van Buitenen argues that this is a reference to the Poros of Arrian's *Indica* whom Alexander honoured. Gilles Schaufelberger has noted that Guy Vincent in his lecture on the 21st May 2005 at the University de Provence identified Kalayavana and Alexander. We have, therefore, at least three identifiable historical figures, both denoting the same historical period.

[Pradip Bhattacharya is International HRD Fellow (Manchester University) and a retired Additional Chief Secretary with a PhD on the Mahabharata.]

Page 284 of the Bhīṣma Parva (Book 6) was victim of print-culture bad karma, being a perfect replica of page 286. Below are the correct ślokas.

कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।
सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः । ९ ।

न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते ।
त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ।१०।

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ।
यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ।११।

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।
भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ।१२।

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।
सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ।१३।

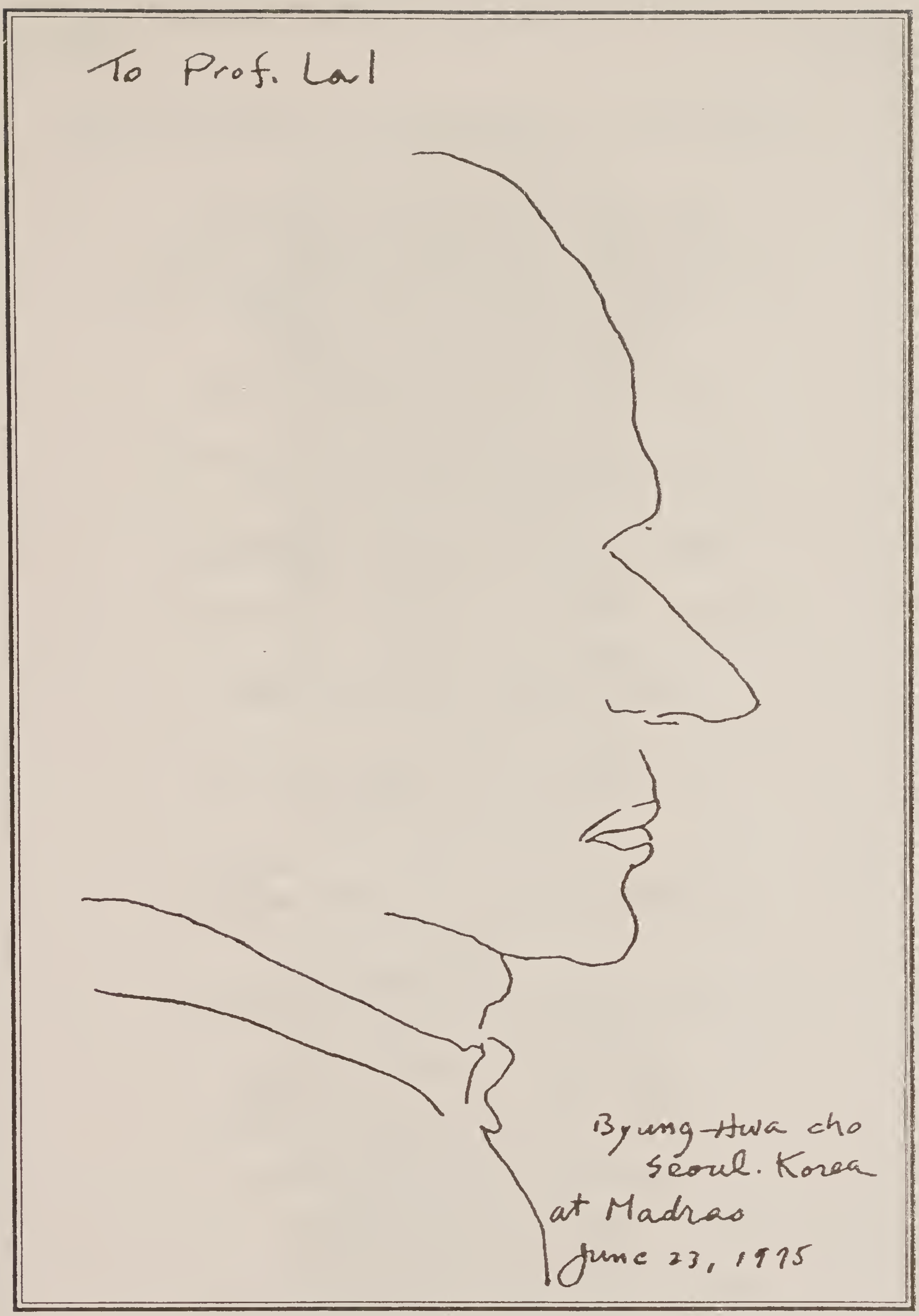
अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।
विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ।१४।

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत्कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।
न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ।१५।

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।
पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ।१६।

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Further details are available from the Director, P. Lal, at the WORKSHOP address: 162/92 Lake Gardens, Kolkata 700045, India (Phone: 2417-4325, 2417-2683 and 3095-9727 E-mail: profsky@cal.vsnl.net.in) Browse in the WW Book Nook Website: www.writersworkshopindia.com

# WRITERS WORKSHOP ~ A Credo by P. Lal

Glory be to Mahakala. It is now 2007. I am three score and nineteen. Time for some home truths. Because WRITERS WORKSHOP has close to 3200 separate titles in its checklist (published over 49 years 1958-2007), and because it has averaged around 100 titles each year since 1995, there is a misconception that it is an Indian publishing leviathan. (No other publisher in India has that many titles on its annual list.) The truth is much less awesome. WRITERS WORKSHOP has no office; it operates from my residence, from the living-room and a multi-purpose bedroom. It has no secretary; my "secretary" is a three-tiered Godrej filing cabinet. It has no editor, no "readers" to inspect, evaluate and OK typescripts; I do all three tasks. It has no proofreader; I perform the nitty-gritty of deleting, accreting and correcting. It has no "assistant" to acknowledge or follow up letters; I do all that too. It has no typewriter; I reply in longhand. (From 2004, kowtowing to the hi-tech convenience, I sometimes seek help from my computer-savvy grand-daughter Shuktara to e-mail replies to insistent and urgent enquiries for WW information.) It has no retail or wholesale distribution "outlet"; there is only a cubby-hole of a kiosk at my residence (8 feet x 4 feet roughly) called the Book Nook, where a dedicated young assistant attends to intermittent sales of WW books. This Lake Gardens kiosk opened in 1998, 40 years after WW's inception.

How then has WW survived? Without plush foundations to back it, without advertisement, without large-hearted patrons? Initially, by the skin of our teeth (1958-1964). Then (1965-1990) by my visits to hard currency lands, specially Great Britain, the USA and Australia on lecture assignments and visiting professorships on two dozen or so occasions, and pumping the shekels thus earned to keep alive a gasping ideal.

Alternative publishing is desperately needed wherever commercial publication rules. WW is *not* a professional publishing house. It does not print well-known names; it makes names known and well known, and then leaves them in the loving clutches of the so-called "free" market (which can be and is very cut-throat and very expensive). It is not sad, it is obnoxious, to plead, as publishers do, "I will not publish poetry because it does not sell." Most English book publishing today in boom-time India and outside is book-dumping. There is a nexus between high-profile PR-conscious book publishers, semi-literate booksellers, moribund public and state libraries, poorly informed and nepotistic underlings in charge of book review pages and supplements of most national newspapers and magazines, and biased bulk purchases of near worthless books by bureaucratic institutions set up–believe it or not!–to inform, educate and elevate the reading public.

Because WW goes in for serious creative writing, and because there is no satisfactory distribution network for such writing, its terms of publication are unique. I must be the only publisher in the world who knows when and where every book is sold; I have the name and address of every buyer of a WW book. Upon my acceptance of a typescript, an agreement form is sent to the writer. *All* copyright remains with the writer. Poetry appears in 350 copies; prose in 500. Ten per cent (35 copies of the poetry book, 50 of the prose) is given in lieu of royalty. The writer is also expected to make an advance purchase of 100 copies of his or her book, for sale or distribution as he or she pleases. Printing is done in Calcutta hand-operated presses, situated in the residences of their owners. The whole process is a cottage industry style low-key entrepreneurship, in the belief that small is not only beautiful but viable as well. Vanity and sponsored publishing? Yes, I am humanly vain about it and I do sponsor what I think is good writing. If any lover of literature will offer to subsidise, with no strings attached, striking new work by talented Indian poets, fiction-writers and belles-lettrists, please get in touch with me. The gesture will be acknowledged, appreciated, accepted, and implemented. Such Good Samaritan generosities, not market forces, are at the root of civilised and significant publishing the world over.

For more information, browse in the WW IndEngLit Website: www.writersworkshopindia.com

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